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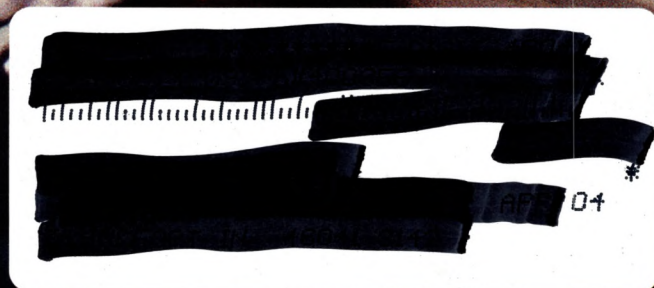
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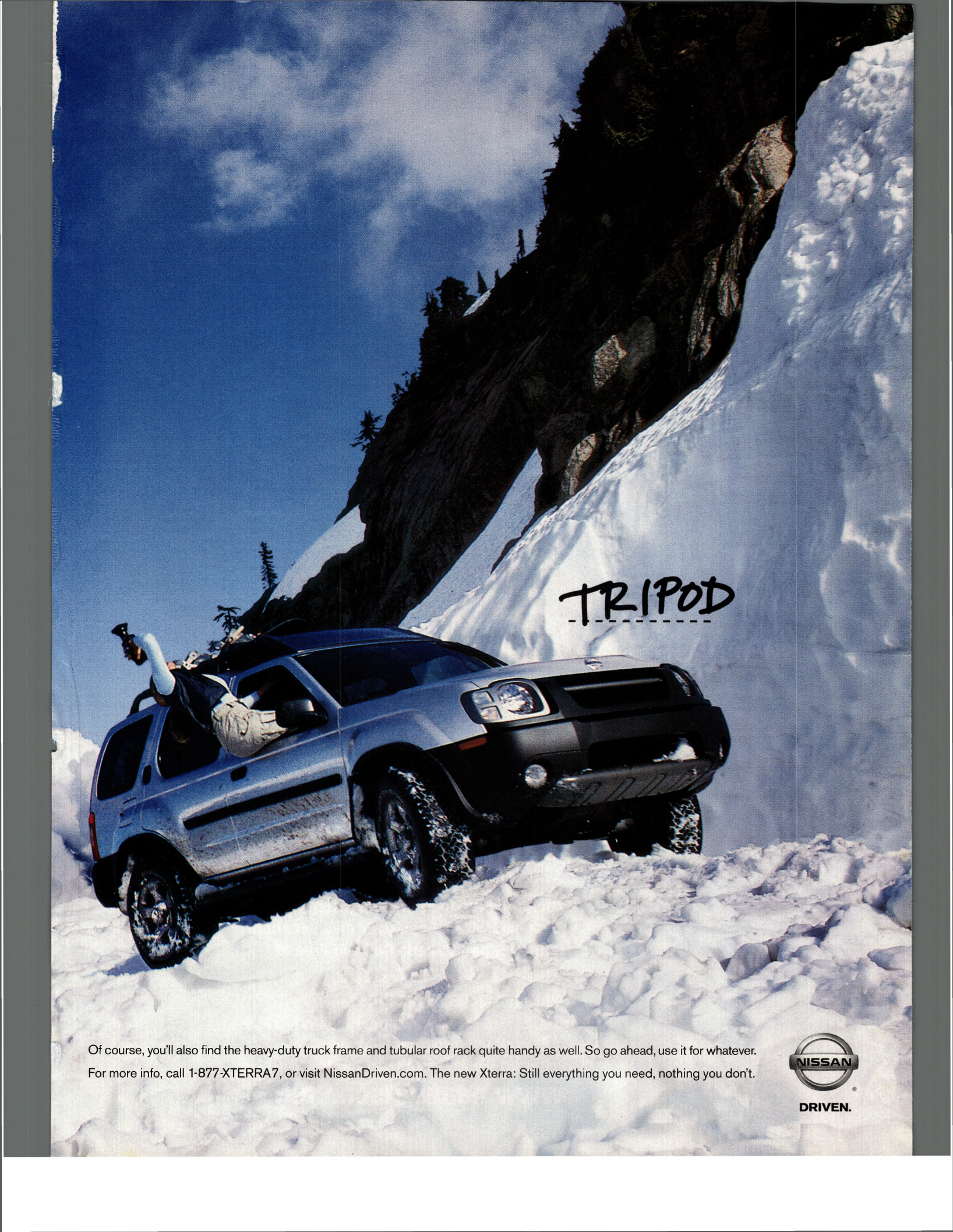
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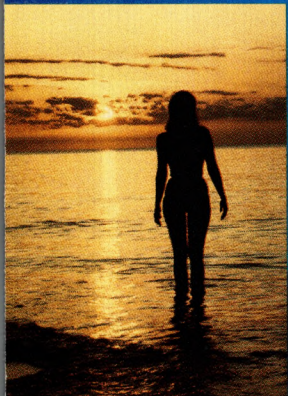
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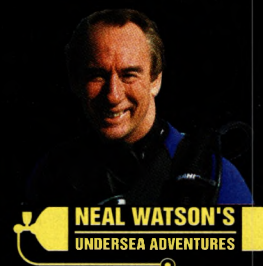
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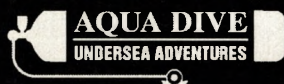
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A siren of the Falls of Baleine on the Island of St. Vincent. Photo: Greg Johnston

Background photo:

A gaff-rigged schooner slips into a pass, keeping in line with the romantic image of Bora Bora, Tahiti. Photo: Steve Simonsen

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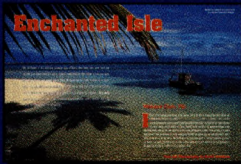
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BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS Some dive-masters will promise you the moon before you slip into the water. Tales of resident Cauliflower Jellyfish, 5-foot barracudas and 300-pound Goliath Groupers seem nothing short of a farce. Well, leave your doubts on board: the "Truthsayers of the Land of *The Deep*" keep their promises (pg 90).

FIJI These islands are quickly becoming "the" place to get away from it all. Pitt, Cruise, Kidman, Carrey, they've all experienced Fiji's smiling people and its "puuurflect" diving. Blue Ribbon Eels check for IDs, as Great and Scalloped Hammerheads man their favorite reef spots. Don't get left behind, be très chic and sail away to the "Enchanted Isle" (pg 95).



HAWAII Thatch-roofed huts, dirt roads and no phones, there's something regal about Kona. From the authentic Polynesian fire dances and 20-foot-tall Tiki statues guarding the land, the Green Sea Turtles, Manta Rays and Humpback Whales crowning kingdom reefs, Kona commands nobility. Become "A Private Guest of Pelé" (pg 98).

MALDIVES Come away to swaying palm trees, snow-white beaches that drop off into sapphire waters, home to Mantas, Whales Sharks and the must-do wall dive of Rainbow Reef. There's a frightening abundance of life in the Maldives, and it's yours for the discovering. Now don't be scared, we'll hold you (pg 102).



ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES These lush islands of green canopies and red blossoming trees are the perfect setting for spectacular macro diving. Bluethroated Pike Blennies and legions of reef squids meander from one coral formation to another, each colored like fruit popsicles. It's "A Tonic for the Senses" (pg 46).

TAHITI So you think you've seen it all? Not if you haven't been to Bora Bora. A great writer once wrote that everything about Tahiti rolls off your tongue: "Tah-hee-tee," "Boor-ahh Boor-ahh." Palm tree leaves rustle in the breeze, Giant Mantas roll overhead in just 30 feet of water, and you fall asleep to the lapping of the ocean waves. Seen it all? Really? (pg 94).



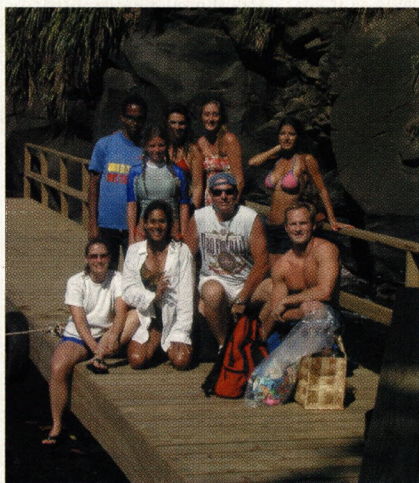


CONTRIBUTORS

HEATHER BROWN, 28 in truth and 26 if you meet her in a bar, is on a mission to drag the hardworking *Skin Diver* staff away from their offices and ply them with margaritas, bullrides and tall tales. When she's not becoming an amoeba in Bora Bora, Heather can be found cruising the Vegas strip in a limo and earning her credentials as a slot machine black belt... well, not really.

Life mantras include: 'Yeeshaw!' and 'Where are my keys?' 🐟

Miami photographer **GREG JOHNSTON** (middle) jumped at the chance to keep his head above water when asked to travel to St. Vincent & the



Grenadines with a troop of gorgeous models. On location for *Skin Diver's* first dive fashion shoot, the intrepid group ventured to some of the island's remote spots and braved its wild animals. When asked about the howling nights, Johnston confirmed the animal rituals were really Fred Garth acting as himself. 🐟

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*** AQUATIC ADVENTURES * PETER HUGHES DIVING ***

*** DOLPHINS IN THE WILD * KIDS SEACAMP ***

AS THIS ISSUE WAS GOING TO PRESS, THE FISH & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION Commission of Florida (FWCC) voted unanimously to ban shark and other marine life interactive feeding dives, directly impacting the livelihood of four Florida dive operators. While the vote to ban was not altogether surprising, considering it had been an ongoing issue for nearly two years, it was the manner in which the decision was made that infuriated divers everywhere and set a dangerous precedent that could impact the future of diving. In a decision-making process that hearkened back to the dark ages, eight commissioners snubbed their noses not only at the facts and decades of data relating to sharks and humans, but also shark experts and scientists, such as Erich Ritter (Chief Scientist of the Shark Research Institute of Princeton), who agree there is no evidence to suggest that shark feed dives pose a threat to surfers, bathers, divers, swimmers, the natural environment or the sharks (eels, barracuda, etc.) themselves. In fact, the sharks implicated in the Florida attacks last summer (Bull Sharks), rarely even participate in Florida's shark feeds (mostly Nurse Sharks and Caribbean Reef Sharks, which have not been implicated in the attacks).

To further point out the absurdity of the decision, the commissioners completely ignored the legions of fishermen who chum the water, often directly adjacent to the same beaches enjoyed by bathers. On the other hand, the dive feeds, run by only four operators, are more than 100 miles away from any of the recent shark attacks. They also chose to dismiss the track record of marine life feeding from around the world. In the Bahamas alone, shark feeding dives have been taking place for nearly two decades and enjoyed by literally tens of thousands of divers, with almost zero incidence of injury. The commissioners, it seemed, were instead influenced by the tabloid-style media frenzy of the past year, relating to the spate of shark attacks off Florida coasts.

Of course, if everything that threatens or causes harm to humans were dealt with in the same way as sharks,

we'd have to ban a whole host of animals and events that pose a far greater danger in everyday life: high-school football, the family dog, domesticated pigs, cracks in sidewalks, driving, biking, in-line skating, skateboarding, walking and eating at fast food restaurants. But, I'd imagine it would be impossible to get family pets banned, although the annual number of human maulings by dogs in the U.S. is in the thousands. And, domesticated pigs are responsible for more

Eight Heads Buried in the Sand

annual deaths worldwide than sharks are in the span of a *decade*. But damn the facts, sharks are evil, mindless killing machines, while chow chows are cute, fuzzy and cuddly. At least, according to TV.

With so little substance to the endangering people argument, the commissioners most recently changed their tack and claimed that the issue wasn't really the shark attacks, but the alteration in behavior of wild animals. Well, it's true that if you feed an animal that normally hunts or scavenges for its food, it will take the handout. But is this change permanent or harmful to the environment or the animal? Do four dive operators do more altering than hundreds or thousands of chum-happy fishermen? As far as altering the natural behavior of a wild creature as an argument—heck, millions of people feed birds in the winter. Should that be banned, too? Should the FWCC go door to door rounding up hummingbird feeders? Should we treat one creature differently than another? Or one group differently than another? The FWCC has somehow filtered out just four dive operators from the entire state of Florida as the ultimate perpetrators of marine animal behavioral change.

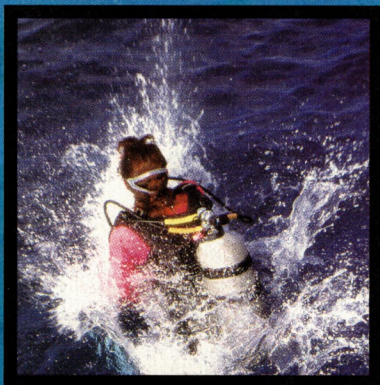
The last public discussions led by the FWCC proffered as support the misguided reasoning that sharks will associate humans with food and if dissatisfied, will become aggressive, like a bear or other terrestrial animal. Erich Ritter and other shark scientists rail at the comparison. There is no science to support the assertion that sharks respond the same way as the bears of Yosemite. And there certainly is no empirical evidence from the places in the world where wild shark feeding has been going on for years (Florida, Bahamas, Tahiti, Australia, etc.) to support the statement.

But, in the end, the FWCC ignored the evidence, buried their collective heads in the sand, and punished four dive operators who've positively influenced our understanding and awareness of a much maligned group of marine creatures.

Luckily, this ban hasn't been left unchallenged. As litigation proceeds, we will keep you updated about how the dive community can help lift us from this puddle of ignorance. 🐟

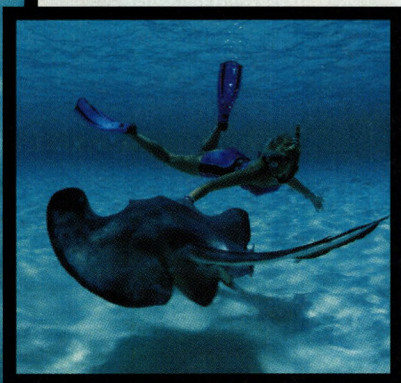


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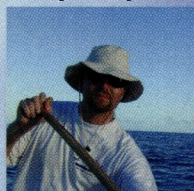
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Amos Nachoum



Amos Nachoum a renowned expedition leader, has led *National Geographic* expedition teams with Dr. Eugenie Clark, Dr. Sylvia Earle and astronaut Buzz Aldrin. His award winning photography has appeared in more than 500 publications worldwide.

Ty Sawyer



Ty Sawyer, the Editor of *Skin Diver* magazine, has extensive dive travel experience, which has taken him from the Red Sea to Palau and much in between. His award winning writing has appeared in numerous publications and literary magazines.

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Readers Speak Out

Too Close for Comfort

In the "Hawaii Seven-O" article (October 2001), there is an inference about the Manta Rays and the Kona Surf Hotel. It implies that the Manta Rays stopped showing up when the hotel

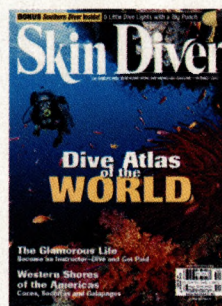


closed and the spotlights were turned off. The Manta Rays actually stopped coming there regularly to feed many months prior to the hotel closing. During the last dive I did there (when Mantas actually showed up), more than 35 divers were crammed in a space no more than 50 feet in diameter, and the Mantas had to face multiple sets of glaring video lights, camera strobes, flashlights and outstretched arms. I believe it all just got to be too much for them.

—Bill Stohler, Kihei, Hawaii

Learning One's ABCs

In the October *Skin Diver* ["Dive Atlas of the World"], page 74 states that the ABC islands [Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao] "...are part of the Netherlands Antilles." I would imagine that Aruba would be quite surprised to hear this. Aruba has been an independent



country for 15 years. The Netherlands Antilles consists of five islands (actually four and a half) and Aruba is no longer one of them.

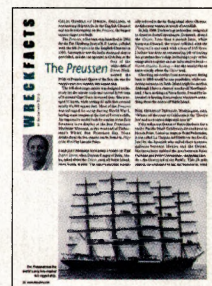
—Rob Lowe, via e-mail

Bumping Into an Old Friend

I've been out of diving for a while, but recently joined a dive club and plan on getting back into the sport. I've been diving since 1979, so I have a couple years under my belt. I was pleased to see Ellsworth Boyd was still writing for *Skin Diver*. I was convinced, due to the high integrity of your writing staff (proven by Ellsworth's talent in past years), that I had to buy a year's subscription to *Skin Diver*. Back in the 1980s, I was President of SECONN Dive Club out of Connecticut and corresponded with Ellsworth about dive sites that we dived. I was also surprised to see there are several scuba diving magazines out on the market now.

Seeing the October issue of *Skin Diver* and reading Ellsworth's article was like running into an old friend. Those of us with 20-plus years of diving experience like to see experience behind the writers in your magazine.

—Debra Greenhalgh, via e-mail



Is This You? Do You Know Them?

On July 18, 2001, while sailing down Hawk Channel off Boca Chica Key, FL, we found a Max Wet disposable underwater camera floating complete with a dozen or so sea creatures attached. The camera had obviously been in the water a while. When we had the film developed, this couple was featured, and they had evidently been snorkeling off the dive boat *Dream*, probably out of Key West. I would guess from the pictures they dived at Sand Key. If this is you or you know who these divers are, have them contact me at sjywood@aol.com and I'll send the pictures.



—Scott Yearwood, Memphis, TN

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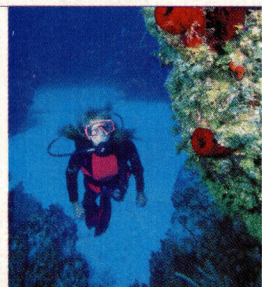
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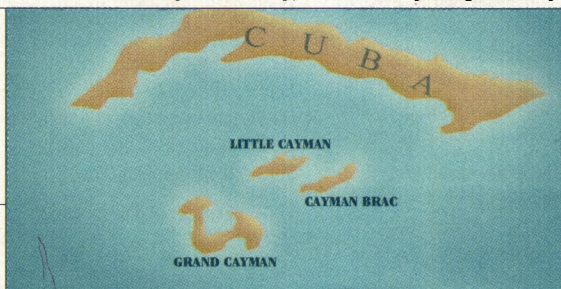


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Fortuna I & II Luxurious 5-Star Yachts

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www.travco-eg.com
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International Diving

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(800) 544-DIVE
www.love2dive.com
November 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002: 10% discount on any live-aboard boat.

Iti Diving International

Serving: Tahiti
(689) 57-77-93
www.itidiving.pf
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Jack's Diving Locker

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(808) 329-7585
www.jacksdivinglocker.com
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www.thejunk.com
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www.landfallproductions.com
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Larry Parker's Reef Divers

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December 1, 2001 – November 15, 2002: 20% discount on local diving.

Layang Layang Island Resort

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(03) 216-22-980
www.layanglayang.com
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www.lomalagi.com
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Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas

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(800) 327-6709

www.maduro.com
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Marlin Dive Centre

Serving: South Sulawesi, Indonesia
(62) 411-85-8762
www.marlindive.com
November 10, 2001 – November 10, 2002: 10% discount on live-aboard trips and on land-based dive packages.

Manta Dive Center

Serving: Tobago
(868) 639-9969
www.mantadive.com
May 1, 2002 – December 15, 2002: Discount on pre-paid dive package, from 2 divers and up.

Maui Dive Shop

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(800) 542-3483
www.mauidiveshop.com
March 15, 2002 – December 1, 2002: 20% off of all scuba charters with the mention of this program.

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Serving: Bahamas



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www.nealwatson.com/nas-sau.html

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(800) 808-3483
www.oceanconcepts.com
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 20% off standard rate for 2-tank, 2 location boat dives. Not valid with any other offer. Must reserve directly.

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January 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002: 20% off regular single dive trip fee.

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www.oceanpoint.com/scubadiving
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% discount on room rates.

Ocean Promotion Scuba & Snorkel Adventures

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24 www.skin-diver.com

www.florida-adventure.com/oceanpromotion
February, 2002 – February, 2003: Discounts on diving/snorkel trips, beach hotel accommodations and Funky Fish Snorkel Camp for Kids.

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www.pacificislandsclub.com
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Paradise Charters

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www.peterhughes.com
November 15, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 20% off travel aboard Dancer Fleet vessels in locations listed above.

Proscuba Dive Centre

Serving: Tobago
9868) 639-7424
www.diveguide.com/proscuba
February, 2002 – June 2002: 10 boat dives (including tank, air, weights) 5 days of a 2-tank (back to back). Seven nights accommodation at Surf Side Hotel. \$503 per person/dbl occupancy. Also receive for free with this package: airport transfers, refreshments on boat, lunch after diving, one night dive (valued at \$135).

Ra Divers Fiji

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(679) 694-511 / www.radivers.com
November 15, 2001 – March 31, 2002: 15% off normal dive rates.

Reef & Rainforest

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 794-9767
www.reefrainforest.com
February 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on 7 night or more live-aboard dive vessel.

Saba Rock Island Resort

Serving: BVI

(284) 495-9966
www.sabarock.com
November 15, 2001 – August 30, 2002: Special off-season rates to divers, stay 3 nights get 4th night free.

Sail Caribbean Divers

Serving: BVI
(936) 560-6794
www.sailcaribbeandivers.com
September 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001: 10% discount on any Sail Caribbean diver charter booked during these dates.

Sanvics Scuba

Serving: Grenada
(473) 444-4753
www.sanvics.com
November 15, 2001 – November 15, 2002: Receive 2 free dives or 1 day free Jeep rental with purchase of an Open Water Course, Advanced Course or a 10-dive package.

Scuba Bimini Dive Center

Serving: Bimini
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/bimini.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Scuba Junction

Serving: Thailand
(66) 77 456 164
www.scuba-junction.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% discount on all diving and course published prices.

Scuba Quest

Serving: Thailand
(66) 763-85143
www.scuba-quest.com
November 15, 2001 – November 15, 2002: 15% live-aboard cruises, 10% any diving course, free diving equipment upon completion of course for all further diving with us during your stay.

South East Asia Scuba Divers

Serving: Thailand
(66) 76 281-299
www.phuketdive.net
January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on live-aboard trips and on day diving trips.

Sea Fever Diving Cruises

Serving: Bahamas
(800) 443-3837
www.seafever.com
November 9, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on Sea Fever sponsored trips, as advertised on website.

Seascape Inn

Serving: Andros, Bahamas
(242) 369-0342, www.seascapeinn.com
Now through June 1, 2002: 15% off 8-day/7-night/5 to 2-tank dive packages.

Siam Dive n' Sail

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www.siamdivers.com
January 1, 2002 – May 1, 2002: 10% discount on all live-aboard diving.

Sipadan Dive Centre

Serving: Malaysia
(6088) 240-584
www.sipadandivers.com
November 30, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 10% off published price at \$120 per person/per night.

Southpoint Divers

Serving: Florida
(800) 891-DIVE
www.southpointdivers.com
May 1, 2002 – June 26, 2002 & September, 2002 – November 15, 2002: 10% off diving, does not include gear rental. Must present coupon. Must mention coupon at booking.

South Florida Diving Headquarters

(800) 771-3483
Serving: South Florida
www.southfloridadiving.com
November 15, 2002 – June 1, 2002: 10% off diving, snorkeling equipment rental and lodging.

St. George's Lodge

Serving: Belize
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www.gooddiving.com
December 1, 2001 – September 1, 2002: 10% discount on diving or non-diving packages, 3 night minimum.

St. Lucia Undersea Adventures

Serving: St. Lucia
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/stlucia.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Stockler Expeditions

Serving: Brazil
(800) 591-2955
e-mail: stocklers@usa.net
March 1, 2002 – June 15, 2002: \$300 discount on any dive vacation in Brazil, when booked through your local dive store. *Dive vacation includes air and land.

SunBreeze Hotel

Serving: Belize
(501) 26-2191
www.sunbreeze.net
December 1, 2001 – April 30, 2002: 10% off any rack rate packages offered by SunBreeze and booked directly with SunBreeze. Must mention this offer.

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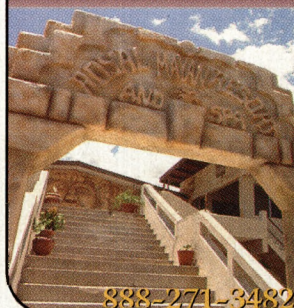
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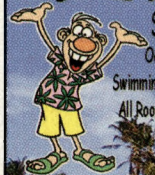
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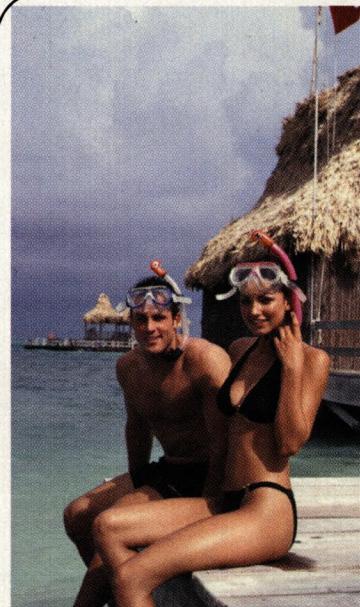
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BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

TWO RECENT NEWS ITEMS HAVE BEEN MUCH ON MY mind: first, a series of articles announcing that California Gray Whales seem to be rebounding from the horrible mass deaths of the last several years. And second, reports from the Climate Conference in Marrakech, Morocco, where 2,000 delegates from 160 nations met to decide just how to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

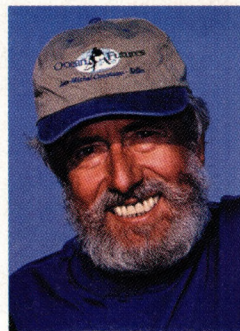
The two events would seem totally unrelated, but in fact, they are fatefully connected. And recognizing the connection is a measure of our determination to hand to our descendants a better world.

Most divers are familiar with the whales' fate. Once plentiful, they were hunted in the 19th century to the brink of extinction. Once protected, they have managed to recover somewhat and are now numbered around 26,000. Not long ago they were removed from the United States' list of endangered species, and the Makah, an American Indian tribe, was permitted to resume hunts for ceremonial and subsistence purposes.

Delisting is a controversy in itself, as the whales still face a bevy of challenges. They face constant threats to their Mexican calving grounds, and suffer disruption from shipping, military testing, hunting and pollution along their yearly 5,000-mile migration from Alaska.

Over the past two migrations, whales began washing up on shore in unusually high numbers—between 270 and 300 in 1999 and 2000, according to *The Anchorage Daily News*. This is ten times the number considered normal.

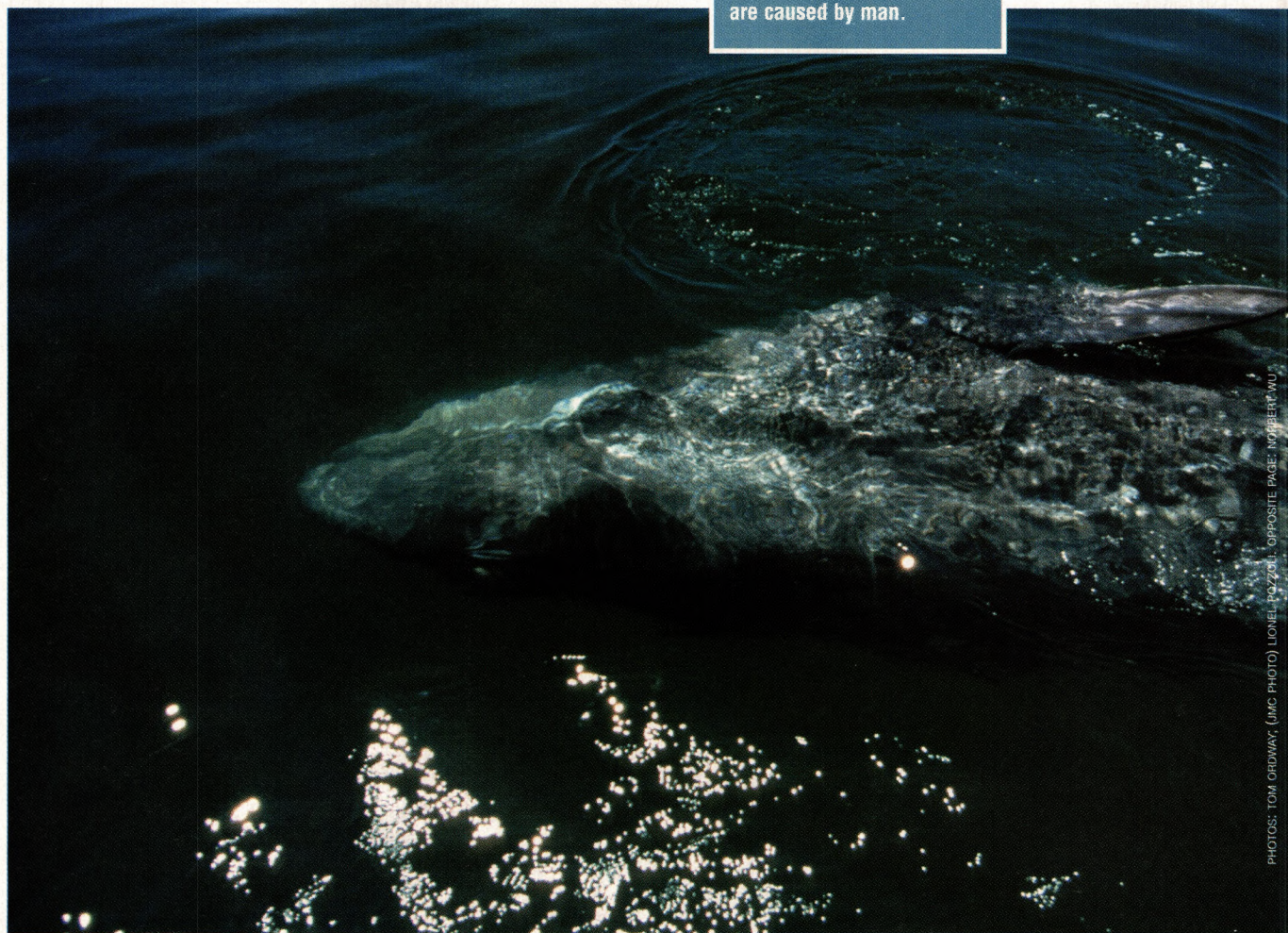
Though the direct causes were unclear, the whales were visibly malnourished, the beached carcasses revealing reduced levels of lipid fats. The whales that completed the migration were not in the most robust shape



Whale of a Mystery

either. *The Seattle Times* reports that they appeared leaner than usual, that a few ventured beyond the normal route "as if searching for food." In some cases, bones could be seen beneath the skin. In the winter of 2000, only 280 calves were born, down from 1,430 in 1997, with stressed females too weak to support a foetus.

The consensus is that even Mother Nature's problems are caused by man.



PHOTOS: TOM ORSWAY; (JMC PHOTO) LIONEL POZZOLI; OPPOSITE PAGE: NORBERT WU

What caused the food shortage?

For many, climate is a leading suspect. As reported in *The Seattle Times*, the El Niño events of the 1990s caused changes in species distribution well into the Bering Strait, where the whales bulk up for their journey south. Some observers detected a change in plankton. Gone were the species which feed amphipods, the whales' main food source, on the sandy bottoms of the Strait. They were replaced by species which remain suspended in higher levels of the water column.

If this is indeed the cause of the food shortage, it won't be corrected overnight, for it takes a long time to grow an amphipod.

Once again, we are confronted with a tangled mystery, this time it is a mystery of our own making.

Climate change has unleashed a global science experiment. We, the Gray Whales and all other living things on Earth are the guinea pigs. How we will adapt? Who will rise? Who will fall? Already scientists are observing evolution at work, as pitcher-plant mosquitoes have extended their breeding cycle to take advantage of the warmer climate cycles.

Global warming, as one observer has noted, is like an oil tanker. Even if we decide to stop it, the ship still has enough momentum to continue on its way for some time. In other words, things are going to get a lot worse before they begin to get better. The challenge to policymakers is clear: Make significant cuts in emissions now before the balance is tipped beyond a point of no return, when we shall be at the mercy of feedback loops that overwhelm our capacity to adapt.

Was this urgency reflected in the recent deliberations at Marrakech? To some extent, yes. We have come a long way since Kyoto. Nations are now will-

ing to sit down and hammer out in legal terms how human societies will reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, and what will happen to those who do not.

But short-term thinking continues to slow the process. Participants are wise to focus on attainable targets,



A friendly Gray Whale receives loving touch in Baja Mexico.

[The whales] face constant threats to their Mexican calving grounds, and suffer disruption from shipping, military testing, hunting and pollution along their yearly 5,000-mile migration from Alaska.

rather than set lofty goals that are politically impossible. Momentum is essential. And yet, the Earth's "biological clock" is ticking. Atmospheric chemistry cares little about political consensus. It follows ironclad rules of cause and effect. So while it is nice to get something signed, it is also essential not to become complacent with the minimal effort, to think about doing more, going further.

The lesson of climate change is that those who are afraid to make small but meaningful sacrifices today will be forced to make much more grave and painful sacrifices in the future.

And the whales? With no control over their own food source, they are at the whim of nature and that means they survive because we permit them to. At this point, we are able to make good on our promise of protection. But all the while, our inability to make bold strides on climate change is dooming them, and the rest of life, to an uncertain future. 🐋

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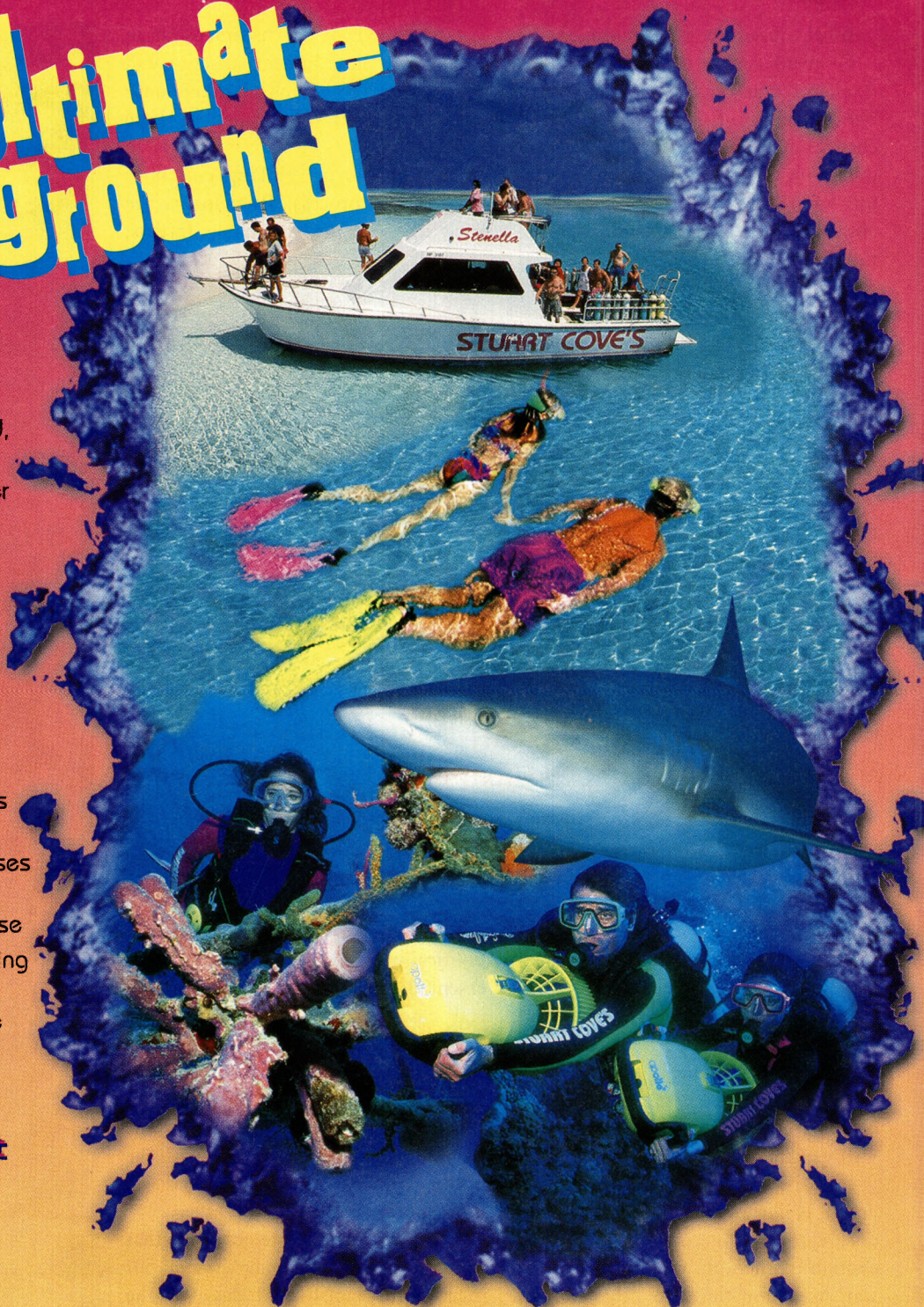
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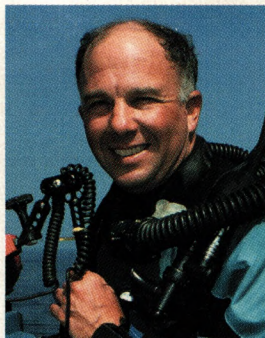
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Finding Inspiration

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

Sometimes my work just looks and feels stale. Surely you have been in this rut. Any words of wisdom to help me light my fire? —Rob K., Springfield, IL

WRITER'S BLOCK. EVERYONE HAS EXPERIENCED THIS agonizing ailment. No matter what you do nothing reads the way you want it to. The grammar, punctuation and spelling might be correct, but there isn't any power to your message.

Unfortunately in the world of underwater photography, there is a sister ailment, photographer's block. It is no doubt a demoralizing feeling to be unable to conjure up the fresh ideas that give underwater images life.

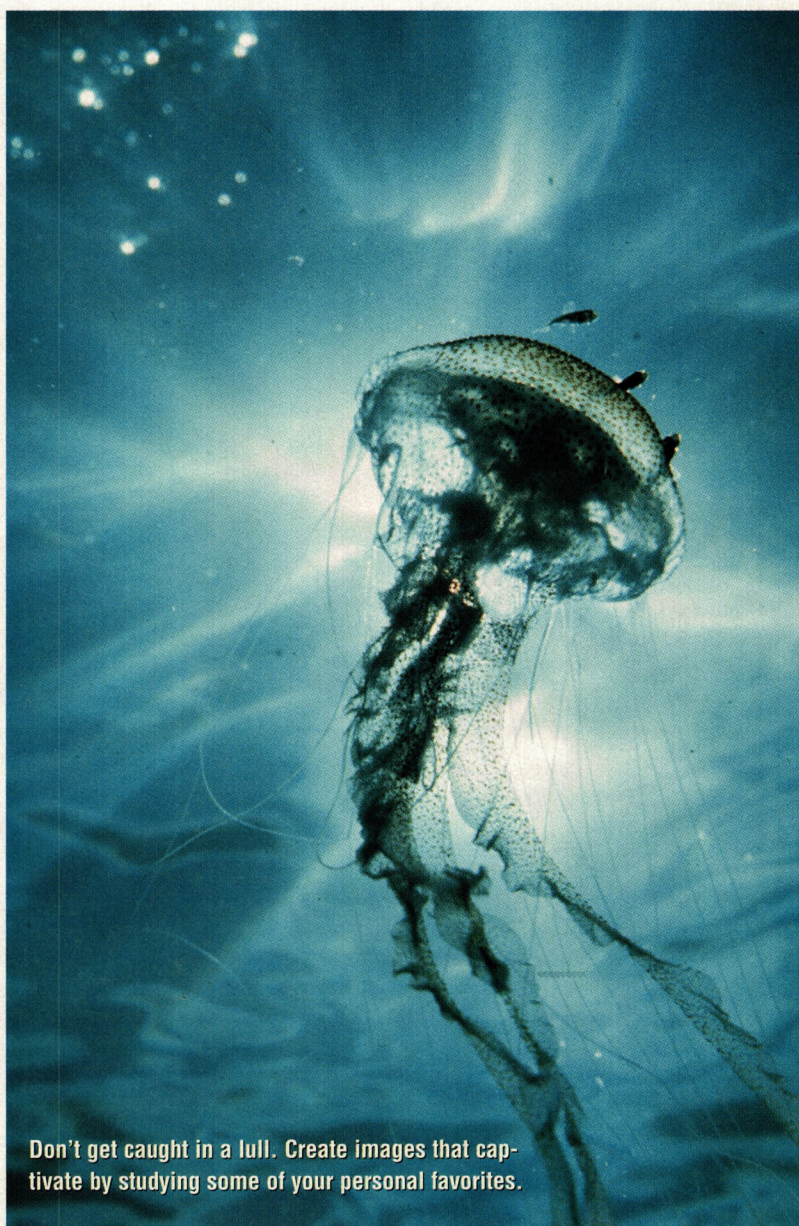
Good news is, I've been there. Even better news is, I've developed a way to overcome it. Surely this process is personal, but I might be able to push you out of your "funk" and back to creating incredible shots.

When I feel photographically blocked, the first thing I do is thumb through recent issues of *Skin Diver* to look at images other shooters have created. If I see a piece that David Fleetham has produced, I stop. To my way of thinking, David is the "photographic truth." He doesn't take images. David *makes* them. Just looking at David's work gets my motor running.

I also stop every time I see images from Doug Perrine, James Watt, Norbert Wu, Chris Newbert, Brandon Cole, Eric Hanauer, Ernie Brooks, Clay Wiseman and David Doubilet. This list is not intended to slight anyone else's work. It's just that I know that the work of the people in this group has inspired me in the past. Collectively, these shooters see light and how to "paint with light;" they recognize the magic in sub-

jects big and small. They know their subjects. And while diving in the same ocean, they often see what I do not, or at least what I have not until they shared their work.

I feel the same way when I go to one of Howard and



Don't get caught in a lull. Create images that captivate by studying some of your personal favorites.

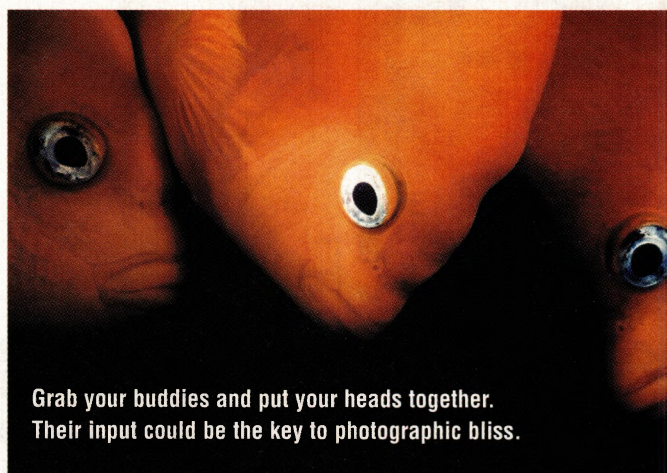
Michele Hall's IMAX films. They have a way of making me realize they have found magic in opportunities I have swam past.

Roger Steene's book, *Coral Seas* has a permanent place on my coffee table. His macro work is stunning. How about the images created by Masa Ushioda and Christoph Gerigk? I became familiar with their work and got great new sources of inspiration when I received *Skin Diver's* July 2001 Photo Annual, an issue that is filled with imagery that the editors consider to be "the best of the best." In my house, this issue is on the coffee table as well.

And there's no need to feel guilty, as if you are "stealing someone else's

work and ideas." After all, imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.

For some photographers, the source of inspiration may come from their peers. Discussing your images with others can not only help you discover what works and what doesn't, it may also spring up new ideas. Going to a dive club meeting and listening to members just talk about their dives can also initiate a fresh start: "...that school of bait-fish was like a silver flash...". How could you portray that on film?



Grab your buddies and put your heads together. Their input could be the key to photographic bliss.

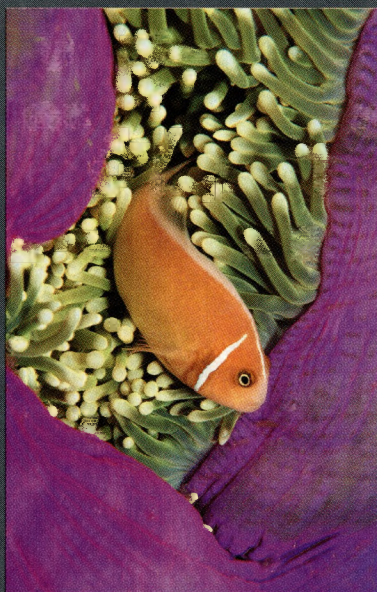
Point is, whatever the means, the end result will eventually be that you no longer suffer from photographer's block, and your images may also improve. And that's something worth working for. 🐟

Getting Started: Think Color, Eyes and Fill the Frame

ONCE YOU GET THE UNDERWATER photography bug it won't take long before you find yourself 50 feet under thinking, "Lights, camera, action!" But with all of the pre-dive purchases and preparations, a lot of beginning photographers fail to take the time to think about what makes a good photograph before they find themselves underwater wondering what they should do to get started. They have a brand-new camera system and no photographic dive plan.

Often the dilemma stems from the fact that both the marine environment and photography are new. If you think this scenario could describe you, here's a little saying that will help you swim over your first photographic hurdle: Think color, eyes and fill the frame. The concepts are surprisingly simple, but there is nothing that says creating compelling photographs has to be complex.

COLOR: It's a well-documented fact that humans are drawn to the warm colors on the red end of the spectrum. Vivid reds, oranges and yellows command our attention.



The basics—color, eyes and filling the frame—help make an interesting image.

Drab colors are often a turn-off. Good photographers use this knowledge to their advantage by making an effort to find brightly colored red, orange and yellow fish, sponges, nudibranchs and anemones.

EYES: Keep the following in mind: When you look at people and at animals, you look at their faces and eyes. You make eye contact to try to "read" what you can in the faces of people and animals. Your audiences will do the same. Viewers want to know if the divers in the photographs are interested, bored, excited, surprised, frightened or concerned, etc.

While people can't "read" the facial expressions and eyes of fish and other marine creatures as well as we can read those of many people, when humans look at photographs, the eyes are often a focal point. If the eyes of subjects such as fish, dolphins, manatees and turtles are in the picture, viewers will undoubtedly be drawn to them.

FILL THE FRAME: Fill a pleasing percentage of the picture area with your subject. It is almost always disappointing for a subject to be too small in the picture area. Viewers can't see details as well as they would like, and the image is likely to lose much of its potential impact. So get close to your subjects and fill the frame leaving no doubt in the minds of viewers as to what, or who, the subject is in any given image.

Certainly there are some other guidelines to creating compelling images, but keeping these three in mind when you frame your shots will get you started on the path to photographic success.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY?

Take an online course at Marty Snyderman's School of Underwater Photography at www.skin-diver.com. This comprehensive course consists of nine interactive classes taken at your convenience.

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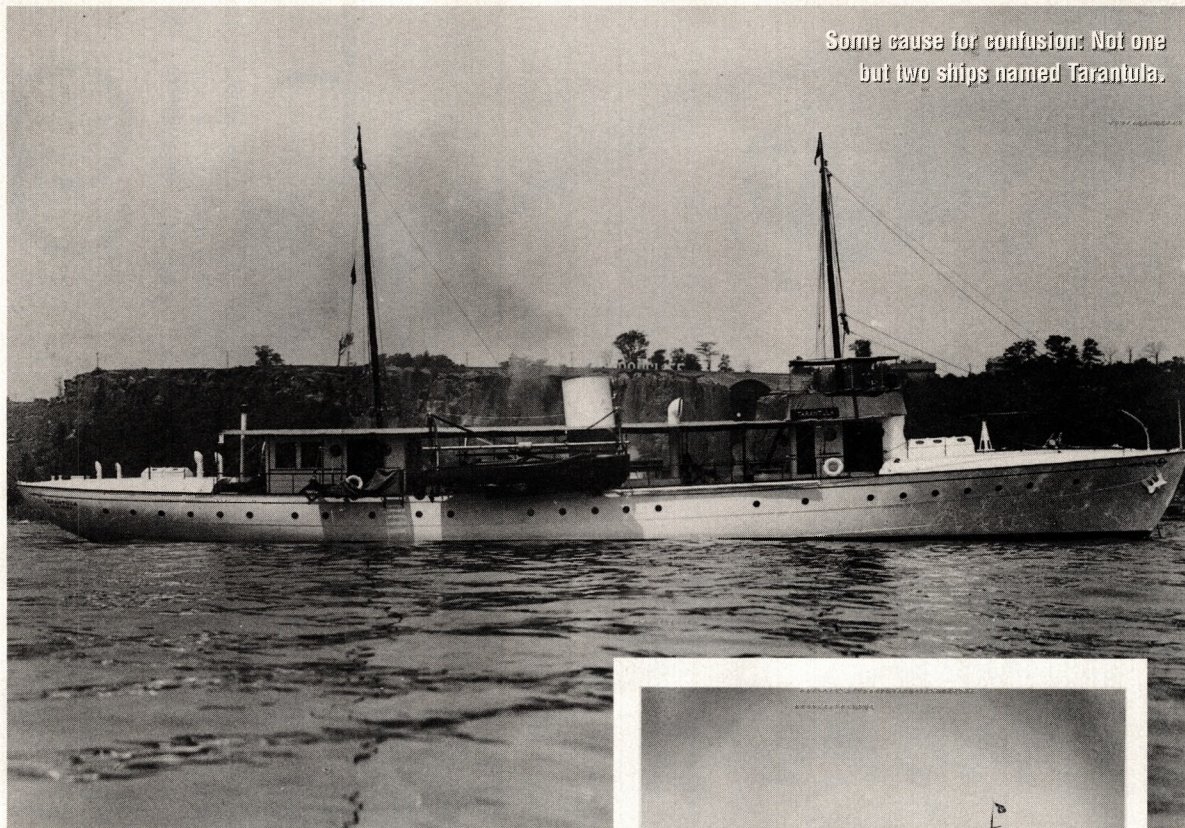
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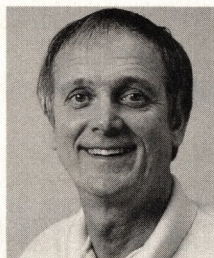


Some cause for confusion: Not one but two ships named Tarantula.

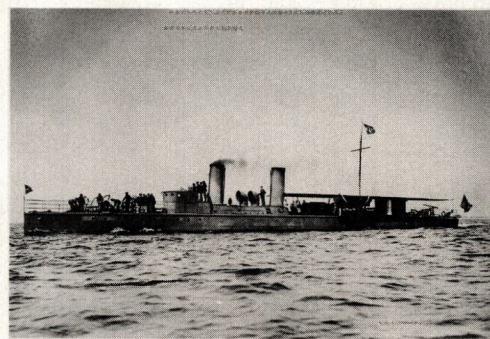
The Tarantula

GREG STEVENS OF HACKENSACK, NJ, HAS researched two ships named *Tarantula* and wants to know which one is sunk off Long Island, NY. Thanks to Dan Berg and his book, *Wreck Valley II*, the mystery has been solved. Dan says there were two vessels named *Tarantula*, both steel-hulled yachts owned by millionaire financier William K. Vanderbilt. The first one, built in 1902, was renamed HMS *Tuna* after it was converted into a Canadian gunboat. After years of service, it was decommissioned and broken up for scrap metal. The second yacht was built in 1912 and converted into a gunboat for the U.S. Navy during World War I.

In October, 1918, while patrolling the waters off Long Island's South Shore, the USS *Tarantula* sank in a collision with the Dutch ship, *Frisia*. Resting 22 miles off Jones Inlet, in 115 feet of water, the former luxury yacht that divers call "the Gunboat," is a popular site. The wreck's boilers and engine provide some relief, but her stern remains scattered in the sand.



John Lachenmeyer, Fred Bellise, Rick Schwarz, Wes Carmen and Jim Fazzolare found a wide assortment of china while dredging around the wreck. For more information, e-mail Dan Berg at wreckvalley@aol.com or visit his website: www.aquaexplorers.com. A model of the *Tarantula* is on display at the Vanderbilt Maritime Museum on Long Island.



LARRY LINWOOD OF MEADVILLE, PA, WANTS TO DIVE the "treasure ship" *Dean Richmond*, in Lake Erie and wants to know where he can gather information on it. A new book, *Erie Wrecks East*, by Georgann and Michael Wachter, contains four pages on the demise of the fourth Great Lakes vessel to be christened *Dean Richmond*. Mr. Richmond was the president of the New York Central Railroad and unfortunately, all of the ships named after him met the same fate. Contrary to rumors, the 238-foot package freighter, sunk in a gale in 1893, is not a treasure ship. When the *Dean Richmond* went down, it sunk carrying assorted freight from Toledo, Ohio, to Buffalo, New York. But its main cargo was pig zinc that scuttlebutt turned into copper and later gold. In 1983, Gary Kozak, renowned sidescan sonar expert, found the *Dean Richmond* after a nine year search that turned up 28 other shipwrecks. Kozak dispelled the treasure rumors and verified the zinc cargo after diving 110 feet and exploring the holds of the freighter resting upside-down on a barren bottom. His charts reveal the wreck's location 11 miles off the Erie, PA, harbor entrance. More about the ship and the Wachters' books on Lake Erie wrecks can be found on their website: www.eriewrecks.com.

LAURA BURNS OF BATON ROUGE, LA, asks if the U-166 has finally been found. "Finally" is a good word for it. I've received a dozen inquiries from divers throughout the years asking if the German submarine, U-166, was drifting around the Gulf of Mexico loaded with a valuable cargo of mercury. As the legend spread, frequent sightings—similar to the legend of the Loch Ness monster—were reported. BP Amoco and the Shell Oil companies finally discovered the sub while surveying for an underwater pipeline route. The remains of the phantom submarine rests in the northern part of the Gulf of Mexico, 45 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi River. The remains of the SS *Robert E. Lee* are nearby, sunk by the U-166 in July, 1942. American forces sank the sub shortly after the attack.

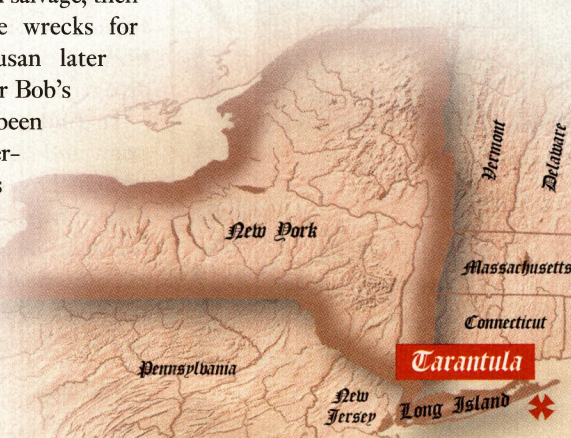
BILL ELDER JUST MOVED TO DOVER, DE, and wants to join a club that does a lot of wreck diving. The Delaware Underwater Swim Club, one of the oldest in the country, plans many shipwreck dives from early spring through late fall. I'm putting Bill in contact with Mal Kroeber, Jim Durnan and Pete Civitese, all either former or present club officers who are happy to have new members.

SUSAN BELL OF BRINSON, GA, WROTE: "My husband and I are certified divers, and we own a nice boat. We want to search for treasure, so where do we start?" I immediately thought of Bob "Frogfoot" Weller, who has been salvaging treasure from the 1715 Spanish Plate Fleet and the 1733 Spanish Armada for more than 40 years. Bob, who heads Crossed Anchors Salvage, Lake Worth, FL, reserves several weeks each summer when he conducts classes in salvage, then takes his students to the wrecks for hands-on experience. Susan later responded: "I signed up for Bob's course and couldn't have been happier. I visited eight different galleons during a week's stay in Lower Matcumbe Key. Bob and his wife, Margaret, and the other students were just great. We took measurements

on the remains of the *Almirant* and the *San Francisco* and salvaged some nails, sheathing tacks and a hasp. There was no treasure, but that was OK because I, as a neophyte, made a striking discovery on some remains they call the Brick Wreck. Bob was excited when I brought up a piece of a Chinese porcelain plate that pictured people aboard a boat in a river country setting. The scene helped date the wreck to the early 1800s when this style of porcelain was fashionable." Divers can call Bob Weller at Crossed Anchor Salvage, (561) 588-2903. They may also go to Ernie Richards' (Bob's partner) Spanish Treasure and Colonial Coins website at: www.home.att.net/~enrada.

GARY NESTER OF THE NEW YORK CITY Sea Gypsies Dive Club, sent some news about the Hahn Premium Ale wreck. This is not a ship, but a large truck that crashed and sank in an Australian river while transporting 24,000 bottles of beer. Divers from nearby Tweed Heads, a small town in New South Wales, rushed to the scene to help. Meanwhile, the beer distributor sent two massive cranes to retrieve the truck, but failed to send any security. The local police inspector was quoted as saying, "While residents are diving for the grog, they are in fact stealing by 'find.'" But he chose not to chase them away during three days of salvage, where one diver alone brought up 400 bottles of Hahn Premium Ale. During a post-salvage celebration, divers renamed the drink "Tweed Heads: Good for what's 'ale-ing' you!" 🐟

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply. Or e-mail Ellsworth at: ellsworth@aol.com.



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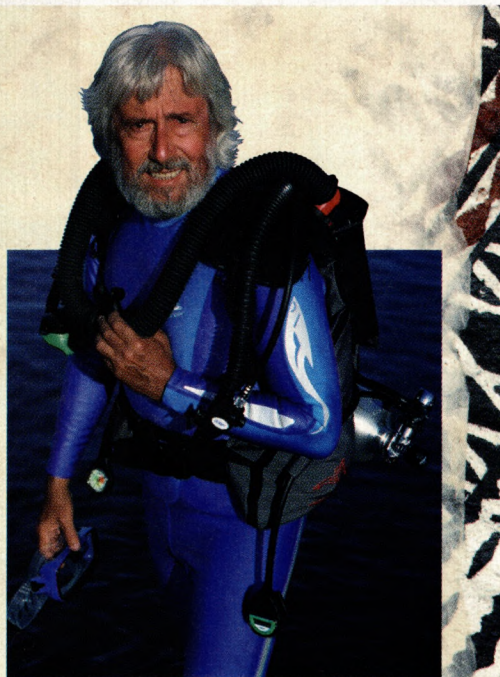


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BY MICHELLE DANNER

Wrecks, Reefs and Rewards in Bermuda

SKINDIVERONLINE

We all have an inner child in us; a part of our adult psyche that yearns for a gold star or reward for personal achievements. As divers, one of the best aspects about diving is the satisfaction that comes with numerous accomplishments, from diving a dreamed-about region, to having a rare marine life encounter, to simply perfecting your buoyancy. Wouldn't it be nice to have proof of this—a piece of paper documenting the moment?

Well, if you dive the wrecks in Bermuda, such validation is obtainable. Bermuda is located in the Atlantic Ocean and is less than a two-hour plane ride from New York or Boston. Known for its coral reefs, great visibility and clear blue waters, Bermuda also boasts a Shipwreck Certificate Program.



Eighteen designated wrecks are part of the program, which offers a bit of evidence after each shipwreck dive: a certificate on parchment-style paper stating the name, location and history of the wreckage. The wrecks rest in shallow water, some shallow enough to snorkel and are home to an abundance of marine life. All 18 certificates can be obtained in a single dive trip.

To find out more about the program and about Bermuda, log onto to Skin Diver Online at www.skin-diver.com. Bermuda's Custom Destination Site boasts information on the certificate program, as well as dive operators, resorts, local weather and more. 🐠

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San Diego HammerHeads Splash onto the Scene!

THE HAMMERHEADS experienced one of the largest turnouts for this past year's International Dive-In Day, with more than 100 local divers splashing into the waters off La Jolla Shores, CA, in pursuit of the world's



record for the largest group dive. Club members from San Diego jumped on board, diving alongside chapters from all over the world.

While the San Diego HammerHeads are experts at having fun, they also know how to get down to business. When divers' rights were called into question with the proposed ban on marine life feeding in Florida, San Diego members rallied their support by sending e-mails and letters expressing their concerns to the Florida Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission (FWCC) and the governor's office.

They have also focused their efforts on recruiting new members, which will help to fuel enthusiasm and profit for the dive industry. The hope that by creating a community of divers through the HammerHeads (which boasts 125 chapters worldwide), San Diego can help keep diving thriving. 🐟

For more information on the HammerHeads or to find out how you can get involved, contact LydiaE@dema.org, or visit www.h-heads.com.

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California Classic Equipment Divers

IN 1998, THE CALIFORNIA CLASSIC Equipment Divers (CCED) was organized by Charles Orr and William "Duke" Drake. The goal was to create a group interested in demonstrating the techniques used to dive with classic equipment, both hard hat and scuba, preserve its history and honor the men who dove it. A majority of the members also belong to the Historical Diving Society USA.



During the past three years, activities have consisted of an annual day-long diving demonstration and display at the L.A. Maritime Museum in San Pedro, CA, and educational displays at the Yuma Crossing State Historic Park at Yuma, AZ. Informal meetings are held bimonthly at the L.A. Maritime Museum. Membership in the CCED is free, and each member receives a quarterly newsletter of upcoming events, information on equipment and the history of diving. Updates on activities and back issues of the club's newsletter can be found on the website. 🐟

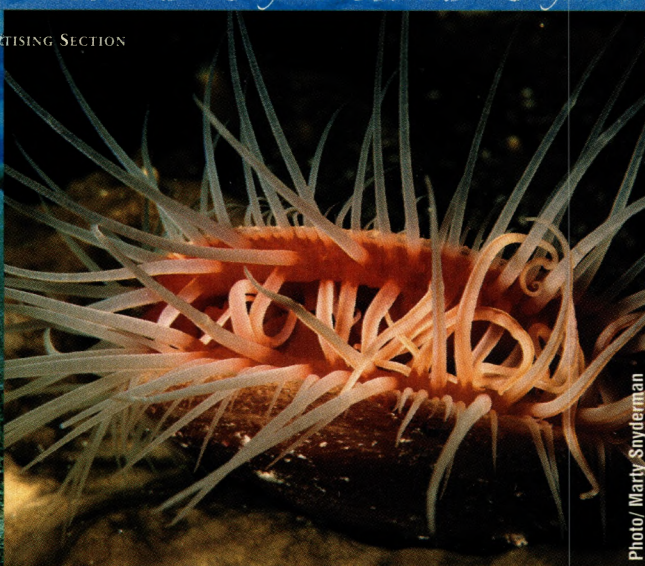
For more information, contact Charles Orr (310) 834-7051, or visit www.geocities.com/cced_barstad.

Send your club news to
allenr@primediaccmmg.com.

By Marty Snyderman



Photo/ Marty Snyderman



Photo/ Marty Snyderman



Photo/ Marty Snyderman



Photo/ violaphoto.com

Rediscovering the Cayman Islands

I couldn't have been more than ten feet deep when I froze in utter amazement. I was a relatively inexperienced diver but I didn't have to be Einstein to realize I was being treated to something extraordinary. I was hovering over Grand Cayman's North Wall on a perfect diving day as shimmering rays of sunlight danced through the water highlighting portions of the reef below. Schooling fishes gathered over the reef top, but at the time I had no clue as to which species was which. I just knew that there was color and life everywhere, and from that moment on I was certain I wanted to be a professional underwater photographer.

On that, my first trip to the Cayman Islands, I only had a chance to dive the waters off Grand Cayman, but as far as I could tell the Cayman Islands had it all from tarpon and turtles to stunning coral formations to shipwrecks in crystal clear water. It took me a few more years before I had the chance to enjoy the explosion of life and color on Little Cayman's Bloody Bay Wall and the solitude of traditional Cayman Brac where I again felt as if I was being treated to everything a diver could possibly hope for. After several years away, in the last half decade I have gotten reacquainted with the waters that changed my life.

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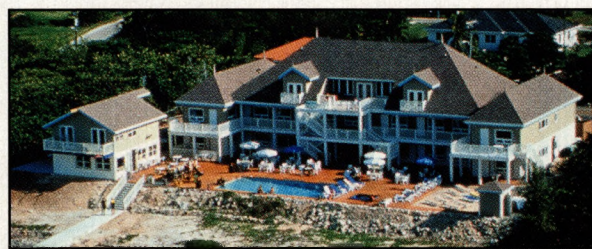
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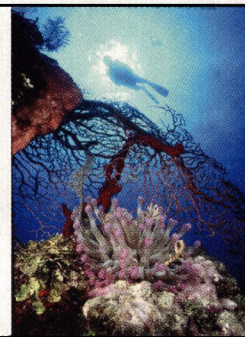
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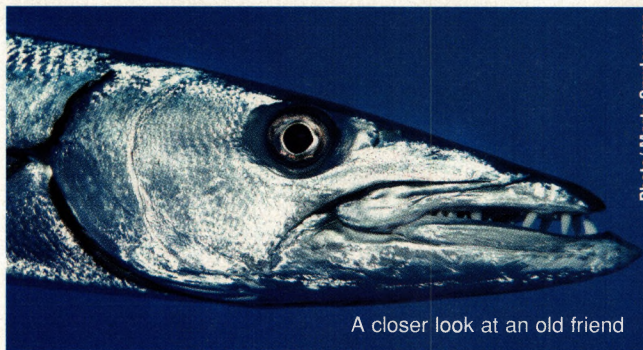
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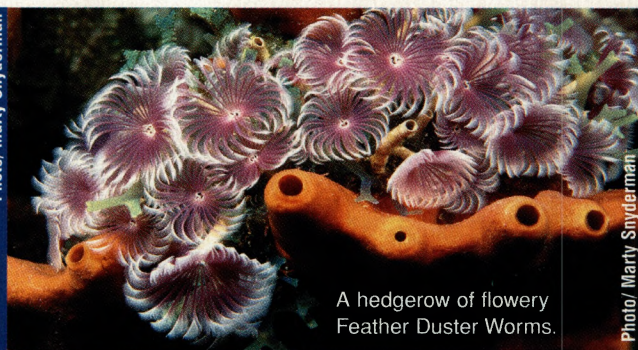
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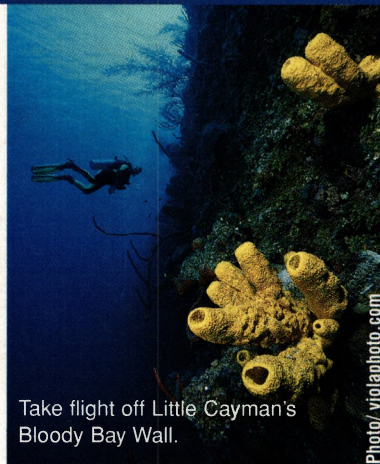
A closer look at an old friend



Photo/ Marty Snyderman

A hedgerow of flowery Feather Duster Worms.

The Cayman Islands are located amidst the clear blue waters of the Caribbean Sea approximately 150 miles south of Cuba. With approximately 40,000 inhabitants on an island that is 22 miles long and 8 miles wide, Grand Cayman is the largest and most developed of the three main Islands. When it comes to diving, Grand Cayman serves up just about



Photo/ violaphoto.com

Take flight off Little Cayman's Bloody Bay Wall.



Photo/Ty Sawyer

A dive club storms the water off Grand Cayman's Cobalt Coast Resort.

everything imaginable in Neptune's Realm. A wide variety of sites along both the East End and the West Side are only a few minutes by boat from the nearest docks and they provide spectacular seascapes and an amazing variety of marine creatures. Stingray City, a must do, is a one-of-a-kind site offering snorkelers and divers a chance to swim with some incredibly docile Southern Atlantic Stingrays in a depth of only 12 feet. At Tarpon Alley you can swim with as many as 100 tarpon while exploring a labyrinth of tunnels and swim-throughs.

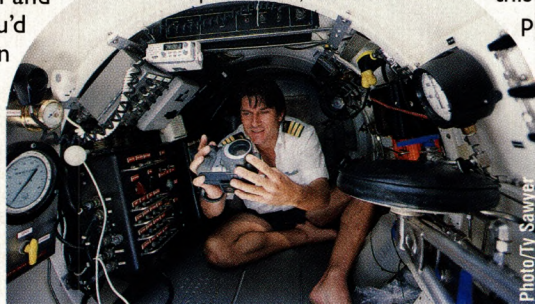
On Grand Cayman you can sail, bike or take a motor cycle for a spin. One can also enjoy fishing or sailing, shopping at the Duty Free Mall, a visit to an aquarium or a few mesmerizing hours at the Turtle Farm. The only one of its kind in the world, it's credited with replenishing the surrounding waters with green sea turtles, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles. Perhaps you'd prefer to relax by the pool or in a hammock rocking above the sugar white sand along world renowned Seven Mile Beach. On the other hand, you can get your adrenaline pumping by trying your hand at some jet-skiing, windsurfing or parasailing! And if a ride along a reef

or even down to 1,000 feet in a submarine piloted just for you has appeal, all you need to do is make a reservation and show up for your dream to become a reality.

After the sun sets if you aren't ready to hit the sack you can hit the town. There is a wide selection of restaurants ranging from those serving fine gourmet cuisine to traditional local fare and the occasional burger joint. If a little nightlife sounds alluring you can try the different tropical libations at a variety of bars and pubs or even try a few moves on the dance floor where reggae, soca and salsa sounds fill the air.

Island-hopping is easy in the Cayman Islands, with daily inter-island service provided by Island Air and Cayman Airways. With only 30-minute flight east on Island Air from Grand Cayman, the next stop is the tranquil isle of Little Cayman. With a population of only 150,

Adventures in the Atlantis Deep Sub at 1,000 feet.



Photo/Ty Sawyer

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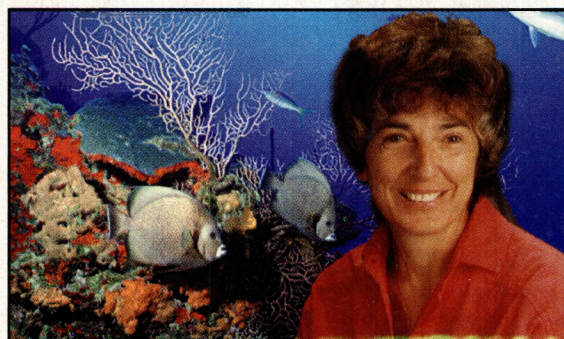
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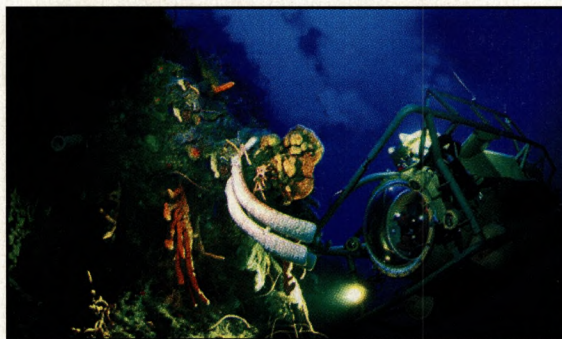
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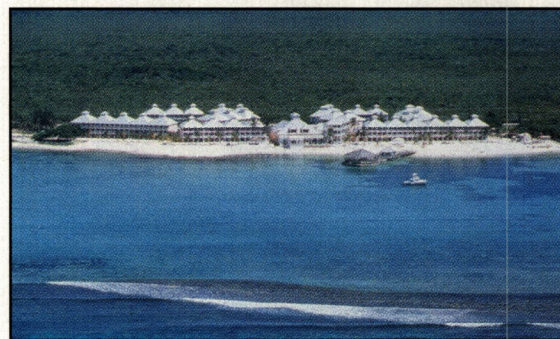
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Hands-on Fun at the Turtle Farm.



Photo: Ty Sawyer

locked brackish water pond at Tarpon Lake, or hike one of the many nature trails inland to discover the plethora of flora and fauna abounding on Little Cayman. Of course, you can also dive like the next Cousteau, bike around the island, kayak, or sail. No matter which way you go, you can look forward to a wonderful meal and relaxing evening at the end of your day.

Mention Little Cayman to a group of experienced divers and their first thought is likely to be the four-mile long, incredibly sheer Bloody Bay Wall located on the island's north side. At sites stretching from Nancy's Cup Of Tea to Joy's Joy you look down and get the feeling that all

that is between you and the other side of this planet is water and the wall, with teeming marine life including turtles, eagle rays, schooling fish and magnificently colored coral formations. Locals are well aware that the island's less publicized south side offers less pressured, pristine reefs, the wreck of the Soto Trader and frequent encounters with larger animals.

A sea turtle navigator through a cloud of grunts.

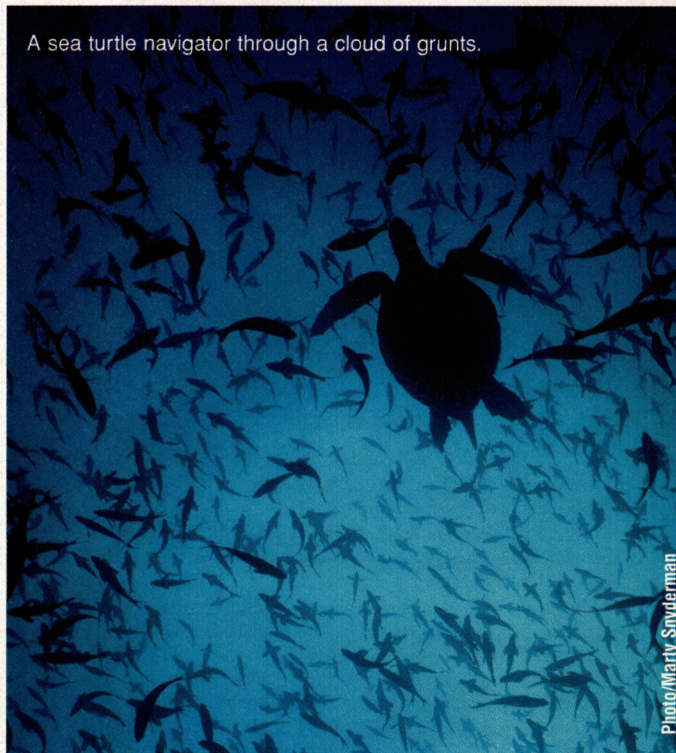


Photo: Marty Snyderman

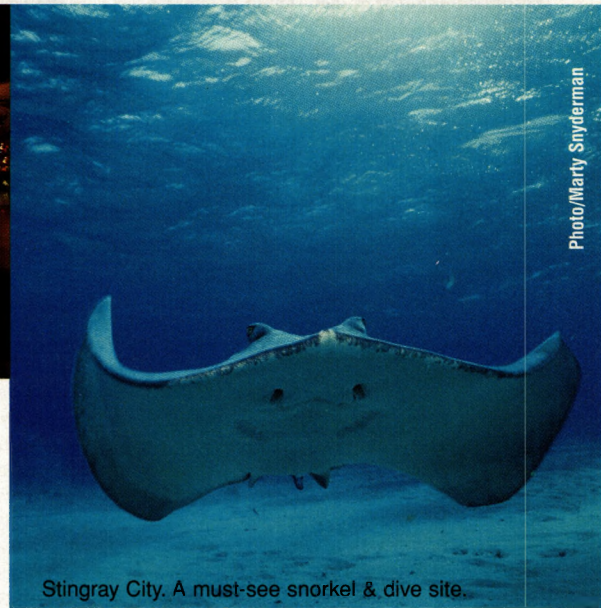


Nightlife with a tropical beat.

Photo/Ty Sawyer

Cayman Brac, only a ten minute plane ride east of Little Cayman, is small and remote, but the diving is excellent and there is no lack of amenities. The spur and groove formations at the Brac are laced with ledges, crevices and overhangs that give the various sites their unique flavor. Schools of jacks as well as colorful snappers, grunts, angelfishes and squirrelfishes are regularly encountered. So are scorpionfish, brilliantly colored fairy basslets, tiger groupers, cudas, parrotfishes and butterflyfishes.

The bottom line is that several hundred of the Caribbean's approximately 750 species of fishes can be found here. That's a lot of reasons to visit the Brac before even mentioning invertebrates like arrow crabs, lobsters, flame scallops, brittle stars, nudibranchs, flamingo tongue snails and so many more. And if you want something different, you can explore the wreck of a Russian warship, the M.V. Captain Keith Tibbetts, a 330 foot long marine life magnet.



Photo/Marty Snyderman

Stingray City. A must-see snorkel & dive site.

On Cayman Brac you can hike to the Lighthouse, take a bike ride, explore caves and go bird watching at Westerly Ponds, one of 35 designated nature sites.

As I think back on my first trip to the Cayman Islands I knew I was onto something good, but I had no idea how special these islands really are. In the 25 years since that trip I have seen a lot of the diving world, but the more places I see, the more I appreciate all that the Caymans Islands have to offer.



Rum Point Solitude.

Photo/Ty Sawyer



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While great destinations often require difficult travel, the Cayman Islands are easily reached—being just a little more than an hour's (jet) flight away from Miami! The following is a list of carriers that provide air service to the islands:

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26

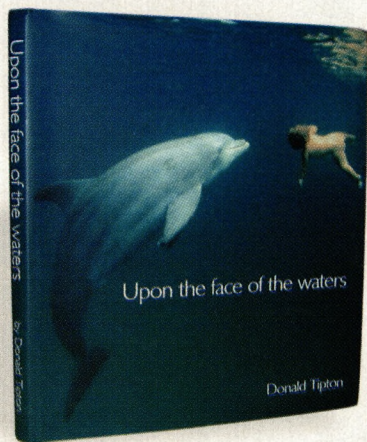
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Welcome to the Diver's Library, where each month we bring you the latest in diving media.

THAT IMAGE. YOU CAN'T GET past it without seeking explanation. A Bottlenose Dolphin smiling at a human baby, underwater, all alone. And that's it. But it's the apparent simplicity that invites curiosity, then beckons for answers to the how, when, where and why.



In his collection of more than 200 images, *Upon the Face of the Waters*, Donald Tipton reveals himself to be a richly talented photographer, above and below the surface of the shimmering blue, with a true eye for capturing images of beauty in motion. Perhaps his success stems from an innate sense of timing, the honing of his craft or, maybe, it's luck pressing the trigger on his camera. I'm guessing it's a combination, but in the end, the resulting images are stunning.

Tipton's first love was classical music; he majored in music and fine arts at the University of Georgia. But more than 12 years ago, he discovered scuba diving, which took his artistic nature in a new direction—down, into the deep. His passion for that which delights the sense of sound, graceful-

ly drifts into his photography, aimed at the sense of sight: the crescendo of a majestic sunset, a chorus of sea anemones in rhythm with the current, the boom of a baby Humpback Whale, and the quiet, intricate inner-workings of a Moon Jellyfish. In each image, we are awed by the simplicity and immensity of nature.

Some pictures are defined by color and clarity, others by gritty texture and a depth that travels beyond the three-dimensional. His images also give divers something to aspire to—those encounters that one mulls over throughout a sleepless night prior to a much anticipated dive.

And in the back of the book, there is a section titled "About the Photographs," in which Tipton shares a little about each photo—where it was taken and often his thoughts about the moment and/or the subject. For instance, how a group of California Sea Lions decided to play a game of tag, designating Tipton as "it." As for the baby with the dolphin, well, you'll just have to speculate until you're compelled to



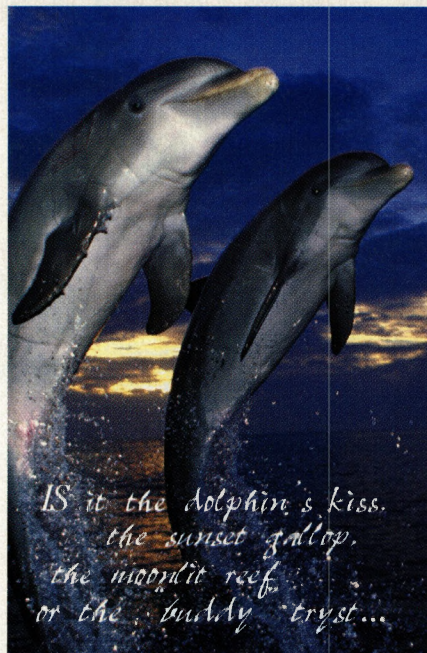
find out for yourself. 🐬

To learn more about the photographer, visit his website: www.donaldtipton.com.

For information on how to submit a product for review in Diver's Library, contact Ryan Allen at allenr@primediaccmmg.com.

Upon the Face of the Waters

by Donald Tipton
Circle Books, Dive International Publishing,
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A full-page background image showing a scuba diver in the upper right, looking towards the camera. The diver is surrounded by a large, dense school of small, blue fish that fills most of the frame. The water is a deep blue, and some coral or reef structures are visible at the bottom.

SAILING AND DIVING ST.

A Tonic for the Senses

St. Vincent is an idyllic island way down the windward chain in the Caribbean. She is one of the few great diving destinations in the world where you will seldom see another dive boat near your dive site. She is a dramatically scenic island, lush with waterfalls, rain forests and basaltic headlands. In the shadow of the now dormant Soufrier Volcano to the north, you can still see rare endemic St. Vincent parrots as you make your way to the refreshing Falls of Baliene. This is an island lost in time, undiscovered, both above and below the surrounding sapphire-colored sea.

Just south of St. Vincent is a group of tiny islands under her jurisdiction, but very dissimilar in appearance. These are the Grenadines. They are largely limestone with sugary white sand beaches and tall windswept palms that arch out over crystal-clear Caribbean waters. These islands are famous among the yachting crowd and contain impressive properties that are second or third homes to royalty, celebrities and rock stars from around the world.

BY CLAY WISEMAN

VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

Long rivers of Creolefish course through St. Vincent's waters as if on their way to a secret congregation of reef creatures.

The reefs beneath the surface of the waters of the Grenadines were a mystery to me. I postulated that they might rival the spectacle that I had discovered on previous trips to the fringing reefs of St. Vincent, just 20 nautical miles to the north. To find out, my wife and I organized an adventure to revisit the marine wonders of St. Vincent, and to sail, dive and explore the mysteries of the reefs of the Tobago Cayes Marine Park in the heart of the Grenadines.

We arrived in St. Vincent in the low summer season. Early August finds the many flamboyant trees of St. Vincent radiant with red blossoms that contrast pleasingly with the dense green

canopies. The clouds were puffy and impossibly white against blue skies that mirrored the Caribbean waters. An afternoon shower, over in less than 45 minutes, signified that this was the

"rainy season." A small covered ferry was waiting dockside to carry us the 990 feet across the channel to Young Island Resort. We were welcomed warmly by Young Island staff who served up cold complimentary rum punches, while insisting we not be allowed to carry our substantial dive bags as we

were shown to our private hillside cottages. These charming cottages overlooked the sailboat anchorage harboring the three 50-foot sailing vessels that later in the week would carry us south to explore the waters of the Tobago Cayes.

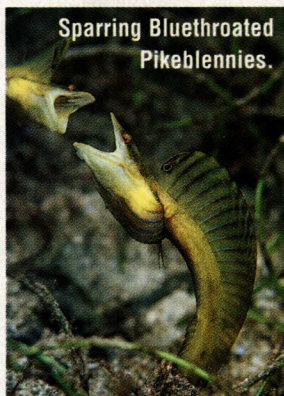
Early the next morning, we began our diving adventure in St. Vincent. Amazingly, I found these dives to be even more stunning than I remember from my last trip here. St. Vincent's coral reefs are unlike any that I have explored in my many years of diving in the Caribbean. These reefs are set atop volcanic ledges and are separated by expanses of course salt and pepper sand composed of crushed coral, shell and basaltic

rock. Bundled on these ledges are a plethora of healthy hard coral. Enormous brain and star corals, and castle-like pillar corals form a dramatic fringing reef in which every polyp is intact and where competition for space is intense. These hard corals blanket the basaltic ledges that drop dramatically from saddle-like crests at 20 feet, on down to 100 feet before hitting the slope.

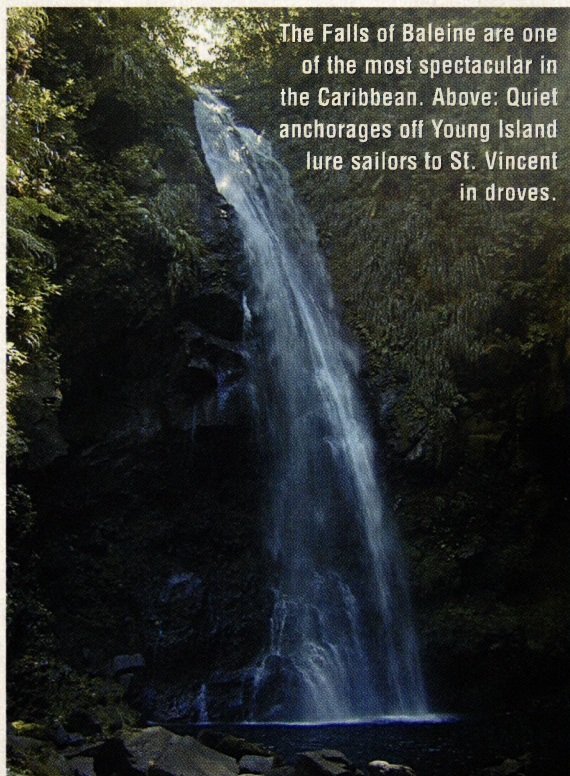
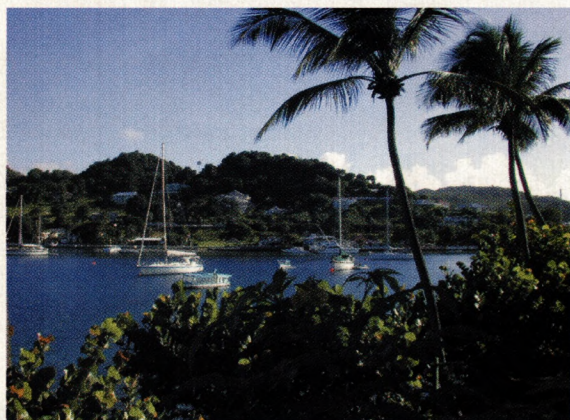
The shallows are also alive with countless soft coral plumes that sway in the gentle swell, sweeping the nutrient-rich waters. Using the plumes for cover are squadrons of reef squids, colorful, curious and crafty. I counted 28 of these jet-propelled cephalopods on one of my dives. At some sites, the shallow slope is completely covered by small finger corals, every finger in the field healthy and resplendent.

When the current is running, as is often the case, St. Vincent's reefs are swarming with schools of small and colorful Brown Chromis. On many of St. Vincent's dive sites these chromis obscure the reef in numbers that rival the most prolific Indo-Pacific sites.

In St. Vincent, schools of big-eyed soldierfish, skittish yet cohesive, form mercurial groupings atop the ledges. And here, the lovely Fairy Basslets, Blackcap Basslets and several species of butterfly-



Sparring Bluethroated Pikeblennies.



The Falls of Baleine are one of the most spectacular in the Caribbean. Above: Quiet anchorages off Young Island lure sailors to St. Vincent in droves.

The Sail-Away Group's Ship's Log:

Day 1: St. Vincent to Mustique. Vessel *Sula* under Capt. Ballentine.

The crossing is 18 nautical miles. We are making 8 knots on a starboard tack. Mustique is shining in the distance. We are hoping to make Basil's Bar for sunset. Basil's is the place to see and be seen in Mustique.

Fish on! I am manning the fishing reel. The 12-pound tuna vibrates, cerulean, just below the surface as I reel him in. Captain shouts, "Winch her in, mon!" Fresh dinner.

The energy and the attentiveness associated with sailing was exciting...course, headings, jibing and tacking keep me on my toes. Sailing is a little bit like diving in that a little effort and some attentiveness can deliver you to magical places.

The group is involved in animated conversation. The topics are varied and ridiculous, silly and out of control...Mick, Jerry, blondes, sashimi, wasabi in the tube vs. powdered, beating the other boat there, accounts of cannibalism (amongst shipwrecked sailors), Pringles, hydrogenated oils and the secret chemicals in Diet Coke that make you fat. Among us there is no need for particularly clever conversation...we just enjoy the sound of each other's laughter. As the day eases into dusk we sail into the anchorage at Mustique.

We snorkel the shallow reefs and follow the flying gurnards across the sandy sea bed where the anchors are dug deep and safe. As sunset approaches we force ourselves from the sea for a quick back deck shower before happy hour at Basil's.

Sunset is fabulous.



Although most famous for its macro life, St. Vincent & the Grenadines has some inspiring reef scenics to match.

fish are also in great profusion. And while groupers and other large reef fish are not common on St. Vincent's reefs, several marine species that are extremely rare elsewhere in the world are frequently found here. Frogfish, seahorses and rare blennies are present in numbers that make the marine enthusiast and underwater photographer swoon. These creatures are marine oddities; cryptically colored species so highly evolved and demonstrating such curious

behaviors that encountering them defines an "otherworldly" experience.

The reefs of the sites Steps, Orca Point, New Guinea Reef, Han's Reef and the creatures of Critter Corner were in vast and colorful profusion. While I guided our diving friends to better underwater photography and videography, Bill Tewes of Dive St. Vincent and his staff guided each dive buddy on remarkable underwater tours. Our group soon discovered the swarms of reef fish, seahorses, frogfish and the other colorful creatures that St. Vincent abounds in. Every surface interval was filled with happy discussions, compar-

isons, descriptions and excitement. We relived the dives during these intervals and the comradery made our diving experiences momentous. We took turns telling the same old bad jokes and everyone laughed whole-heartedly. The tonic, comprised of paradise, good friends and great diving, worked its therapeutic magic upon us.

As the week's adventure ended in St. Vincent, we prepared to set sail for the Tobago Cayes. Young Island's sailing yachts were stocked with all the necessary livations and, of course, with our small mountain of dive and underwater photo gear. 🐟

Skin Diver GUIDE • St. Vincent & the Grenadines

GETTING THERE: There are no international flights into St. Vincent. Travelers must fly into a nearby island and take a prop-plane connecting flight from there. There is a \$20 XCD departure tax from St. Vincent.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round, though January to May is the peak season.

Topside Climate: January to May is the dry season. July is the wettest month. Avg. temp. 78°F.

Water Temperature: Averages 80°F. **Exchange Rate:** \$1.00 US = 2.70 XCD

Time Difference: Eastern Standard Time.

LIVE-ABOARDS: Dive Fantaseo (784) 457-5560 www.divefantaseo.com

RESORTS & DIVE OPERATORS: City Seahorse, Inc. (Underwater Photo tour) (214) 691-1730

www.dive-st-vincent-scuba-diving.com • Dive Bequia (784) 458-3504 www.dive-bequia.com • Dive St. Vincent

(784) 457-4928 www.divestvincent.com • Wallilabou Dive Experience (784) 456-0335 walldivexp@hotmail.com

• Grenadines Dive (784) 458-8138 gdive@caribsurf.com •

Lagoon Marina & Hotel (784) 458-4308 www.lagoonmarina.com •

Sunset Shores Hotel (784) 458-4411 sunshore@caribsurf.com

• Young Island Resort (784) 458-4826

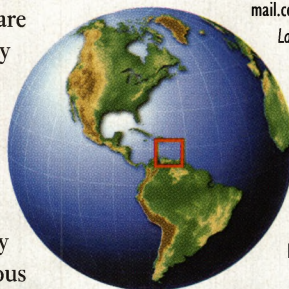
www.youngisland.com

RESOURCES: St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Department of Tourism www.svgtourism.com or

www.scubasvg.com (for diving) • Lonely Planet

Guide to St. Vincent and the Grenadines www.lonelyplanet.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com



Day 2: Mustique to Tobago Cayes.

As we approached Tobago Cayes, it struck me as one of the most scenic tropical island vistas I had ever seen. Twenty to 30 sailboats were anchored just inside the protection of the barrier reef, where the lazy swell dissipated. The water was crystal clear. Anxiously, we donned snorkel gear and began our explorations inside the barrier reef. Impressive.

The reef here is pristine and healthy. Between the gigantic brain coral heads and swaying purple sea fans, sunlight dances over the white sand bottom.

We head back to the sailboats to discover that the dive boat from Grenadines Dive had tied up alongside. The dive operation, owned by Union Islander Glenroy Adams, was ready for our afternoon dives.

Mayreau Gardens: I finned along on a shallow lush coral garden that gently sloped downward from 30 to 60 feet. Because of the expected current, we did a drift dive with a gentle current that slowly swept us along past large

coral heads, Azure Vase Sponges and bright Orange Elephant Ear Sponges. In the shallows, a school of Creole Wrasse, several hundred strong, moved between my dive buddy and me. A little farther down toward the center of the channel, I spotted a big Black Grouper. Here, the larger groupers are in abundance. They are protected as part of the Tobago Cayes Marine Park dictum. Farther along, I spotted a big Southern Stingray then a beefy Blacktip Reef Shark.

Later, we explored the wreck of the *Purini* in 20 to 40 feet of water. She was an old German gunboat sunk in World War I. All parts of the wreck had become encrusted with colorful sponges, making the various surfaces—bulkheads, hull, deck and rails—look much like an artist's palette of color.

Day 3: Capt. Vibes is at the wheel.

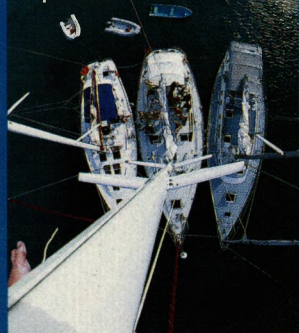
We are on a close reach. The wind is 15 knots out of the east and we are making a respectable 9 knots heading for Bequia. The dive group is singing an extremely bad rendition of "The Brady Bunch." Seamlessly, they move through a disturbing medley of theme songs from '80s sitcoms.

For me it is a bittersweet morning. Though the dive gang is in an impossibly good mood, our time here is closing. Still, the breeze and the billowing sails cheer me up and remind me that we have discovered a special place here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Up comes the jib! Pull in on that line and make it fast. We are headed home.

SKIN DIVER FEBRUARY 2002 49

A high angle on the group's home bases of exploration.



dive suits

2002

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG JOHNSTON



Susán lets the river embrace her at the base of the **Falls of Baleine** in St. Vincent. Her **Camaro Neoprene Suit** keeps the rough edges of the rocks at bay. Contact: Camaro, www.camaro.at OR e-mail in the U.S.: customerservice@sierratradingpost.com.



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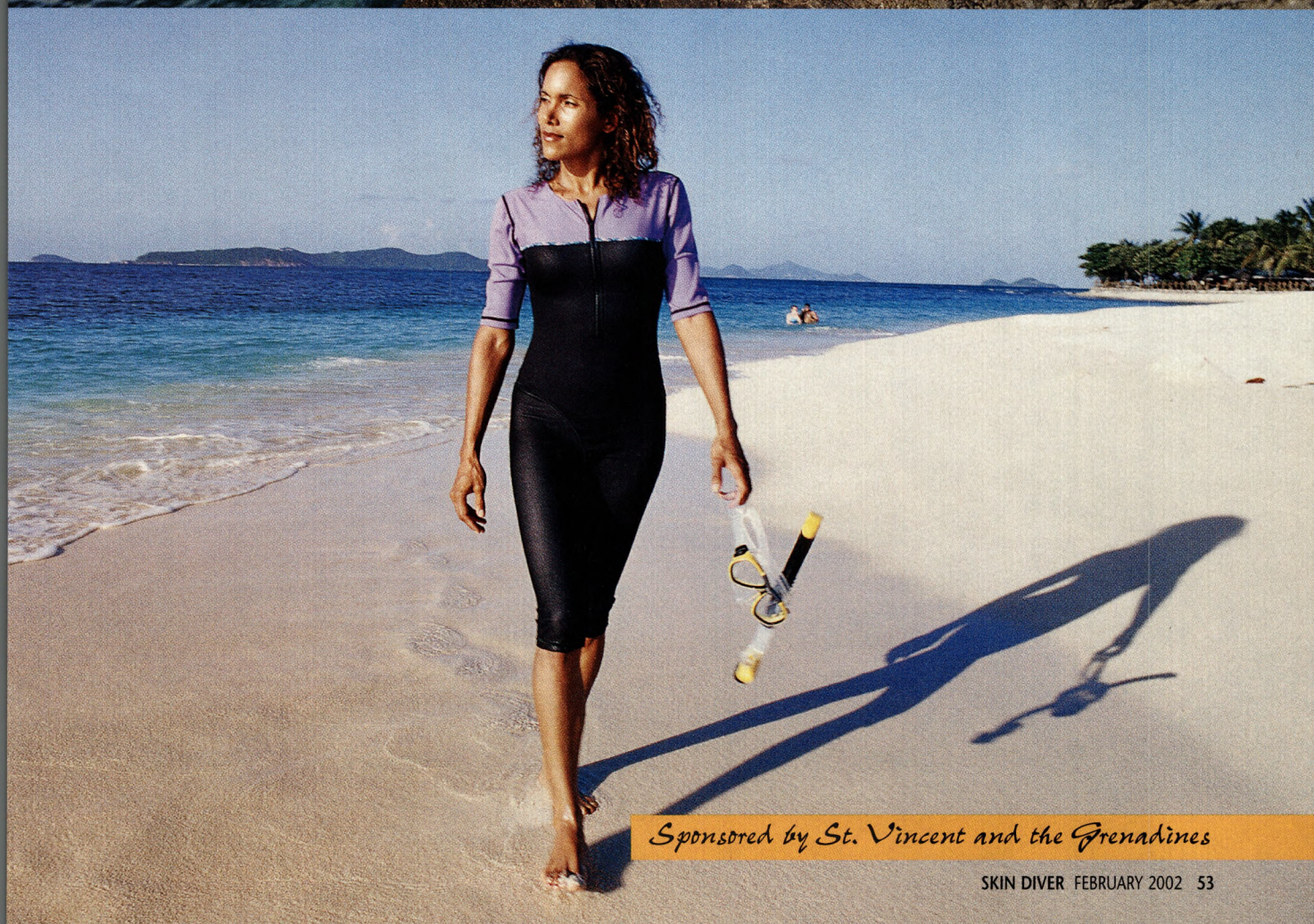


Why are Jason and Marie smiling? Perhaps it's the great fit of their new **Harvey's Kobalt Titanium Wetsuits**. Or the soft sandy shores of **Friendship Bay**. Contact: Harvey's, (206) 824-1114, www.harveys-divesuits.com.

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a leopard-print wetsuit, is crouching on a large, dark rock. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background shows a blue sea and a rocky coastline under a cloudy sky.

Rrrraaaarw. Cat woman has nothing on Holly as she slinks across the rocks of **Young island** in a **Dive Goddess Chi Suit**. Contact: Dive Goddess, (817) 569-9669, www.divegoddess.com.

Below: Shana daydreams in a **Sea Dreams Scuba Goddess** suit on blissful **Palm Island**, in the southern Grenadines. Contact: Sea Dreams, (949) 338-0748, www.seadreamswetsuits.com.




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A full-page photograph of a woman, Susan, standing in a shower of water. She is wearing a blue and black Cressi MED Wetsuit. She is surrounded by dense green foliage, including a pink hibiscus flower on the left. She has her hands behind her head and is looking towards the camera. The scene is set outdoors, likely at a resort.

Susan finds a secluded shower among the bougainvilleas to wash the salt off her **Cressi MED Wetsuit** at **Petit Byahaut Resort** on St. Vincent's west coast. Contact: Cressi, (800) 338-9143, www.Cressi-sub.it.

Opposite page: Ah, the sun, the sea, the hot rocks. It's all good for Shana and her colorful **9000 Series Lycra Diveskin**. Contact: Diveskin, (800) 827-DIVE, www.diveskins.com.

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Susan's **Dacor Thermelle 3/2** comes in handy in the chilly waters below the **Falls of Baleine** in St. Vincent. Contact: Dacor, (203) 852-7079, www.divedacor.com.
Above: Jason and Holly in **Beuchat Alize 3.5 mm** suits on board a **Sunset Yacht Charters** bareboat. Contact: Beuchat, (305) 548-3483, www.beuchatdiving.com.

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A full-page photograph of a man and a woman in wetsuits on a small blue and white boat. The man is in the background, holding a scuba regulator. The woman is in the foreground, smiling, with her legs in the water. The boat has 'Seabreeze' written on its side. The background shows a tropical coastline with a hill and some buildings under a blue sky with clouds.


The dive boat ain't much, but Shana's found a great fitting **Oceanic Caribe Wetsuit** and an attentive helper to dive the gentle waters of **Bequia**. Contact: Oceanic, (510) 562-0500, www.oceanicworldwide.com.

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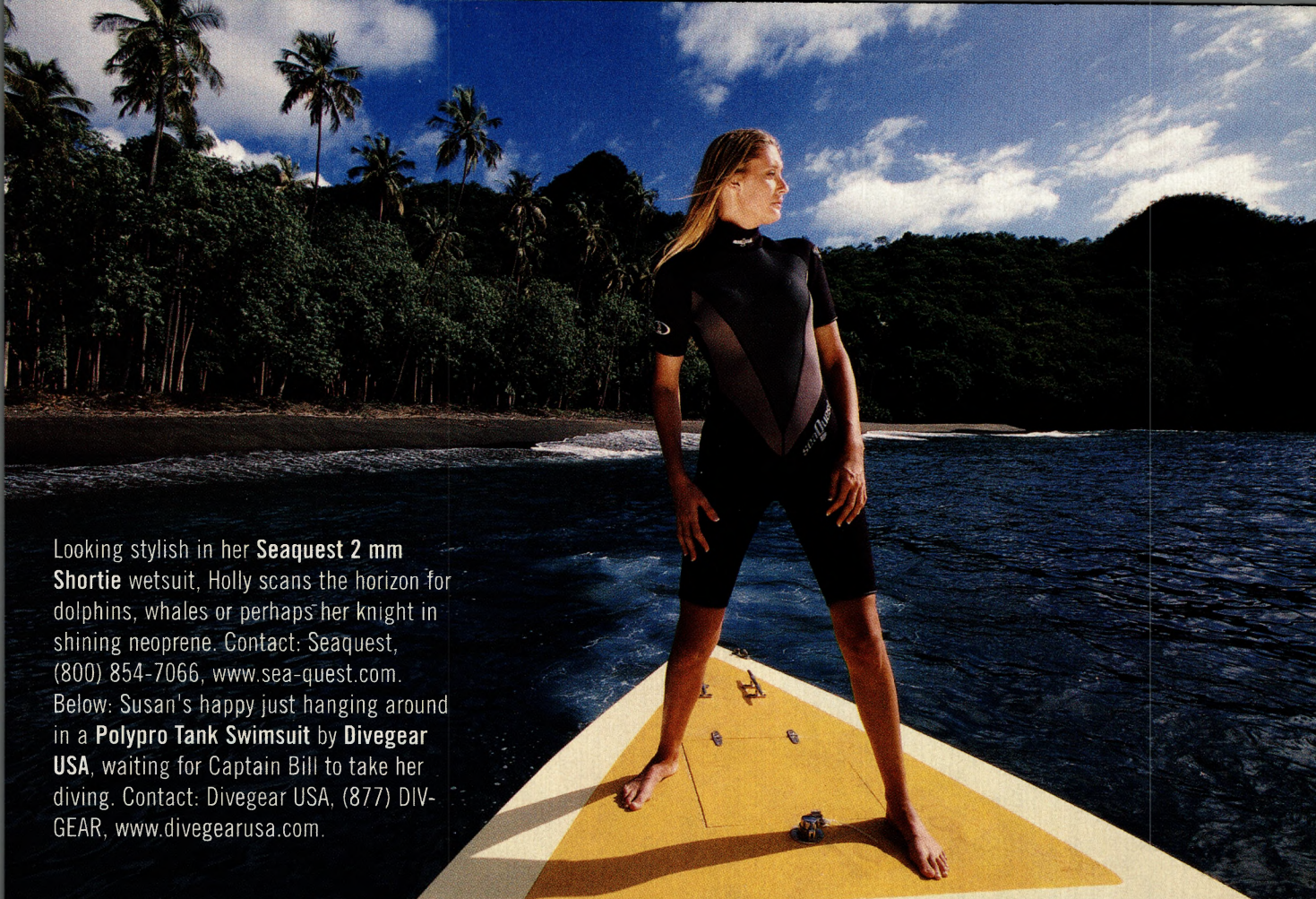
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You Tarzan. Me Jane. Shana emerges from the thick forest of St. Vincent in her **Jungle Cat Slide Back Tank** suit from **Solar Tan Thru Suits**. Contact: Solar Tan, (888) TAN-THRU, www.solartanthru.com.



Jason and Holly contemplate deep thoughts in **OceanArt Wetsuits** along the volcanic beach at St. Vincent's **Petit Byahaut Bay**. Contact: OceanArt, (303) 972-8691, www.pacificocyan.com.



Looking stylish in her **Seaquest 2 mm Shortie** wetsuit, Holly scans the horizon for dolphins, whales or perhaps her knight in shining neoprene. Contact: Seaquest, (800) 854-7066, www.sea-quest.com. Below: Susan's happy just hanging around in a **Polypro Tank Swimsuit** by **Divegear USA**, waiting for Captain Bill to take her diving. Contact: Divegear USA, (877) DIV-GEAR, www.divegearusa.com.



EDIVE ST.VINCENT

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SKIN DIVER FEBRUARY 2002 59

Marie strides to the dive boat in a
Reactor Spring Suit by **O'Neill** on
the dock of **Petit Byahaut Resort**.
Contact: O'Neill, (800) 538-0764,
www.oneill.com.




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Susan likes to guard her **St. Vincent** cave dwelling in a **Body Glove Bad Girl Bikini**. Don't we all? Contact: Body Glove, (310) 374-3441, www.bodylovegirl.com.

A full-page photograph of a woman standing under a powerful waterfall. She is wearing a dark blue and yellow Scubapro wetsuit. Her arms are raised, and she has her hands behind her head, eyes closed, enjoying the water. The background is the cascading water of the waterfall, creating a misty and refreshing atmosphere.

Shana's showering in her **Scubapro Pacific Shorty** wetsuit in the majestic veil of the **Falls of Baleine** on the northwestern shores of St. Vincent. Contact: Scubapro, (619) 402-1023, www.scubapro.com.

Opposite Page, top to bottom: Susan swings to the tropical rhythm in her **Mares Riviera Shortie** at **Princess Margaret** on the island of Bequia. Contact: Mares, (203) 855-0631, www.mares.com.

Shana goes spelunking in the caves on the island of **Bequia** while dressed in a **Parkway T1 Series Titanium Full Suit**. Contact: Parkway Scuba, (800) 587-2822, www.parkwayscuba.com.

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It takes a Herculean effort to pull off a 10-person magazine photo shoot in the tropics. Oh, it's a nice job for sure. But you can work up a mighty sweat hauling more than 30 bags weighing close to 1,000 pounds from Los Angeles to St. Vincent, especially when you land just 13 degrees north of the equator. It was one thing to get the gear on the airplane, then there was unloading and loading everything through customs, shoving it all onto a mini bus, and finally, after a long day of flying, unloading and hauling it onto a ferry boat to the hotel. The bags seemed to multiply like bunnies. Besides lugging gear halfway around the world, there are hotel rooms to secure, flights to book, schedules to coordinate. And try feeding a hard-working group of 10 folks. Don't be fooled, skinny models can eat plenty.

The effort turned out to be well worth it, and the Skin Diver staff would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work and dedication. Our sincerest gratitude goes out to the following people and companies who made this all possible: Vera Ann Brereton [St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Director of Tourism], Hyacinth Philips [Marketing Manager, Dept. of Tourism], Vidal Browne and Jacqui Ollivierre [Young Island Resort], Bill Tewes and Jackie Samuel [Dive St. Vincent], Glenroy Adams [Grenadines Dive], Bob Sachs [Dive Bequia], Sunsail Yacht Charters, British West Indies Airlines and LIAT Airlines.

And a big thanks to Alex and Tyrone, our bartenders at Young Island Resort, and D.J. and Larry, our intrepid Dive St. Vincent boat drivers who braved the wind, waves and finicky models to do their job. Thanks all! —Fred D. Garth



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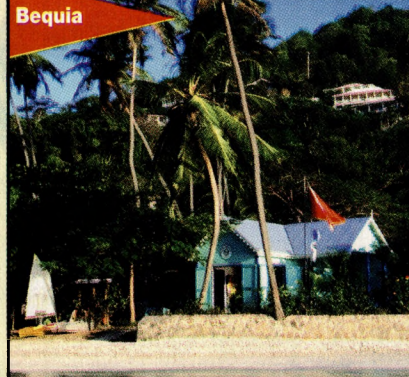
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That's what the live-aboard experience is all about really—adults playing Cousteau. We're reliving those amazing expeditions that transfixed us as kids.

BY FRED D. GARTH

Sometimes when I'm on a live-aboard trip, my thoughts play in a French dialect, and I get the thrill chills. I thank Jacques for opening the door and some ambitious divers for building these floating hotels. Then I strap on another tank, hit the reef and wonder what's cooking for dinner. Ah, the hardships of life at sea.

To appreciate modern live-aboards we have to trace their rather brief history. Most folks agree that the first true live-aboard was the *Highlander*, operated in the Northern Bahamas by Skeet LaChance back in the 1970s. Of course, it was just 65 feet long, took eight hardy divers and was primitive compared to today's boats. Then in the mid-'70s, Bret Gilliam had the 80-foot *Virgin Diver* in St. Croix, and up until the early 1980s, Paul Humann ran the *Cayman Diver*. These boats had enough girth to

spend a few nights on, but they were a half-step away from camping. No private cabins with heads, bunks separated by canvas curtains, one shower for the whole grimy crowd and all-you-could-eat Vienna sausages.

But thanks to some innovative thinking and a dismal offshore oil business, all that changed in 1984. The story unfolded in Grand Cayman, when dive instructors Wayne Hasson and Anne Davis hooked up with Paul and Jill Haines, a Morgan City, LA, couple who had a shipyard full of out-of-work crew boats. The oil industry was in a nose dive, and the boats were sitting dormant waiting for a good idea. So these divers put their heads together, got a few welders busy, and the original *Cayman Aggressor* opened for business. The next year, the *Cayman Aggressor II* hit, then the *Belize Aggressor*, and now there are 13 of them scattered in the world's best diving hot spots.

I made it to Cayman in 1985 to spend a few days with Anne and Wayne, and check out their deal. After my previous live-aboard experience, even I quickly saw that the *Cayman Aggressor* was a slight upgrade—like going from a pogo stick to a stretch limo. I fell in love instantly, and my affection has grown stronger ever since.

One night we anchored in the North Sound, when that place was still just North Sound. Now, it's a giant circus called Stingray City. The next morning the sea was as slick as an onion skin. As I sipped my coffee and marveled at the

Often dubbed "love boats," sailing live-aboards combine ultimate diving adventure with the romance of the wind.

water clarity, I watched a hermit crab amble along in 12 feet of water. Wayne had mentioned that a group of Southern Stingrays had been coming around and were friendly enough to hand-feed. Sounded cool enough. After breakfast, we geared up and watched a few dark UFOs hovering under the transom. We got wet and for several hours had stingrays all over us. We rubbed some fish in my wife's hair and the rays would land on her head like a huge floppy hat. Made for a great photo, but I vowed never to invest in fish-scented shampoo. We rubbed their soft bellies and had the time of our lives. By mid-morning, a couple of other boats had made it out for the fun. Only a handful of folks, mostly fishermen, knew about this ray playground at the time.

For the next few days we anchored on Cayman's finest dive sites and dived them till we were waterlogged. We were doing six dives a day without the strain of schlepping our gear around a resort. It was stunning and I was hopelessly hooked.

In just seven or eight years, by the mid-1990s, more than 150 live-aboards were in service in just about every corner of the planet. The supply and demand was growing at breakneck speed.

Competing side by side with the Aggressor Fleet was respected dive leader Peter Hughes, who jumped into the live-aboard frenzy with both fins.

Peter had built a successful land-based resort business in Bonaire and had expanded it to several other Caribbean properties. In 1987, he helped launch the *Sea Dancer* in the Turks and Caicos. Then came the *Wave Dancer* in Belize in 1992, the *Sun Dancer* in Palau in 1994,

and he still dances today.

The Dancer and Aggressor boats were virtually identical (both conceived from oil-industry crew boats), but Peter set the bar up a notch. Instead of

For divers, it was a great battle. As the competition grew stronger, all the boats got bigger, better and cushier. Chocolates on the pillows, beds turned down at night, hot tubs, big screen TVs, the whole lap of luxury thing was happening at warp speed.

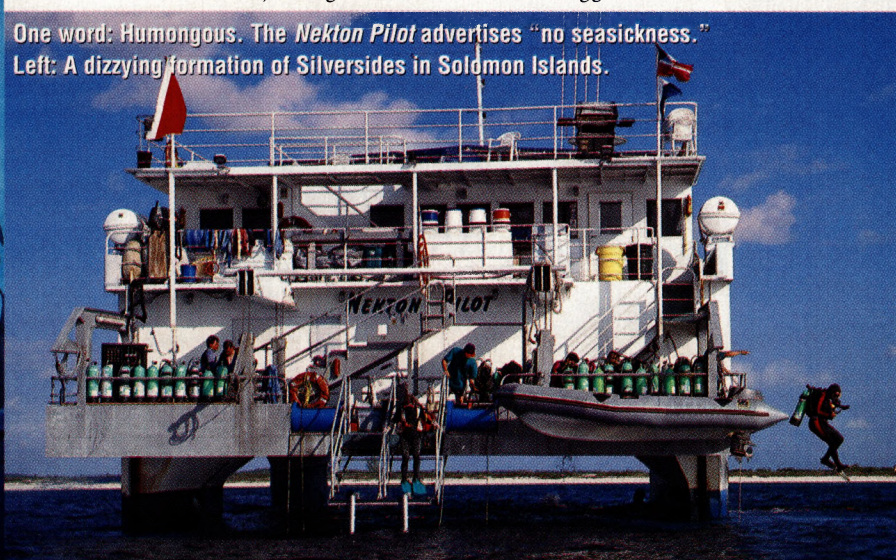
buffet lines, he offered sit down dining with tablecloths and cloth napkins. He put bathrobes in the cabins and focused on serious pampering. He also made his boats bigger.

For divers, it was a great battle. As the competition grew stronger, all the boats got bigger, better and cushier. Chocolates on the pillows, beds turned down at night, hot tubs, big screen TVs, the whole lap of luxury thing was happening at warp speed. When one line added nitrox, the competition followed suit. One offered e-mail, the other did the same. Today, there are eight Dancer boats from Papua New Guinea to the Turks and Caicos. In several destinations you'll find both a Dancer and an Aggressor from which to choose, such as the Galapagos, Palau, Belize, and Turks and Caicos. There still remains some subtle differences between Dancers and Aggressors, but as I tell folks who recklessly ask my opinion, they both offer excellent service, diving and accom-

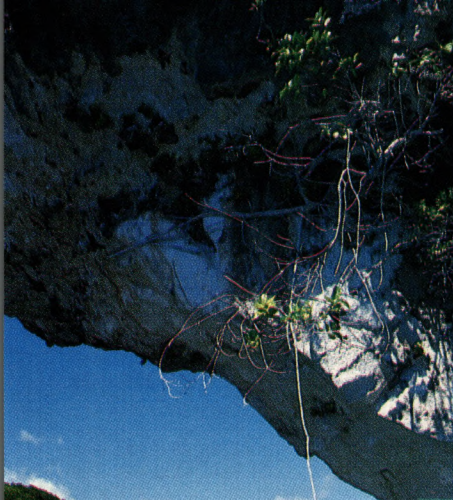
modations. It's like choosing between a Hyatt and a Hilton. It's hard to make a wrong turn with either one.

You'd think from reading my little manifesto here that the top-notch Aggressor and Dancer boats are the only choice. Not so, Tonto. There are numerous operators who run one or two boats and have track records as pearly as Colin Powell's military credentials. In fact, live-aboards consistently picked by divers as top class are the *Sea Hunter* and *Undersea Hunter*, both of which visit Cocos Island, Costa Rica; the *FeBrina* in Papua New Guinea; the *Nai'a* in Fiji; the *Truk Odyssey* in Truk Lagoon; and the *Solmar V*, which exclusively explores the wilds of the Socorro in addition to its Sea of Cortez itinerary. All these boats take you to places and on adventures only accessible by live-aboards, and only experienced by those who want to dive their brains out in the most intense waters on earth. Since 1996, I've personally taken five charters on the *Sea Hunter*, and it's a dynamo. Built specifically for the long crossing and potentially rough seas at Coco Island, the *Sea Hunter* is part of a new breed. Which brings us to the cats.

In 1990, a new Aggressor went to the Kona Coast of the Big Island of Hawaii. And so began the age of the double-hulled Aggressors. These 80-foot catama-



One word: Humongous. The *Nekton Pilot* advertises "no seasickness." Left: A dizzying formation of Silversides in Solomon Islands.



Above: The *Sun Dancer* resting in a Palau alcove. Above inset: I've died and gone to hog heaven.



Explore Costa Rica in style aboard the *Sea Hunter*. Above: Barbi Benton lines up bright pink anthias for a portrait in Fiji.



rans were built in a shipyard in Alaska from scratch. The two key advantages were that it was super wide and very stable. They've subsequently spread Kona's success to two more destinations, Fiji and Palau. All three cats reduce the swaying associated with boating and have lots of room to stretch out.

Of course, they were not the first multi-hulled live-aboards. Mike Ball in Australia introduced big cats with the *Spoil Sport*. He's since added the *Paradise Sport* and both monster catamarans have been winners for going under, Down Under. And a British couple, Duncan and Annie Muirhead, have made trimaran sailboats into plush diving ships. Theirs are the *Lammer Law* in the Galapagos and the *Cuan Law* in the Virgin Islands, the latter of which is the largest sailing trimaran in the world.

It's impossible to speak multi-hulled language without mentioning the *Nekton*

Pilot, a revolutionary SWATH-designed ship that hit the market several years ago. The *Nekton's* not going to win any beauty contests among classic ship designers. She kinda looks like a giant shoe box on the water. But the boat is extremely stable because of its submerged pontoons. They even boast "no seasickness" in their ads. A twin SWATH, the *Rorqual Pilot* has just gone into service in Belize.

On the other hand, a dive ship with truly classic lines is the *Truk Odyssey*, perhaps the template for the next generation of live-aboards. In business for a little more than a year, the *Odyssey* used to be a Fijian coastal cruise ship for 46 passengers. Now it has been reconfigured for 16 lucky divers. The cabins are three to four times larger than standard live-aboards, as are the salon, dive deck and sun decks. Its deep draft provides stability and its

opulence tingles the senses.

There are many more great live-aboard operations, like the *Tiata* in Papua New Guinea, the *Nimrod* and *Taka II* in Australia or the *Caribbean Explorer* in Saba, but you'll just have to get in gear and start checking them out yourself. It's a fun way to do your homework.

When I try to put it all into perspective, I'd like to think that Saint Jacques is looking down upon us with the satisfaction that he helped foster this great live-aboard revolution. I believe when I'm on a live-aboard, he's watching over me with a smile. So the next time you're out on the ocean with the wind blowing through your thinning hair and you hear a voice in the wind saying, "ze sea, it beacons uzzz to explore eets vast and marvelous ecoseestem..." please find a nice French Cabernet and toast one to The Man. 🐟

Skin Diver's Live-aboard Guide

The world has never been as accessible as it is today. This list will give you the ability to explore nearly every reef, in nearly every sea and ocean in the world. If you have a dream destination and crave the nonstop dive 'til you drop and sweet pampering of five star service afloat, then your Cousteau-wishes have just come true. It's all here at your fingertips. Close your eyes, point and plan.

Australia

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Auriga Bay II 60 feet, 10 passengers, 5 cabins. Coral Sea, Ribbon Reefs, Far Northern Reefs. Departs: Cairns, Lizard Island, Lockhart River. \$145 (Jan./Sept.); \$210/day (Oct./Dec.) (6 to 10 days). (011) 61-7-4058-1408, www.reefcruises.com.au



Elizabeth E II 108 feet, 14 to 28 passengers, 13 cabins, 13 in-room heads. GBR, Coral Reef, Queensland, Departs: Mackay, but can re-locate. From \$270/day (3 days to 2 weeks). (011) 61-7-4957-4281, www.elizabethe.com.au



M/V Nimrod Explorer 70 feet, 18 passengers, 6 cabins, in-room heads. Lizard Island, Osprey Reef, Far North. Departs: Cairns. \$170/day (3.5 to 10 days). (800) 322-3577, www.explorerventures.com



OceanQuest 94 feet, 40 passengers, 14 cabins. Norman, Saxon and Hastings Reefs. Departs: Cairns. Approx AU\$150/day (2 or 3 days). (011) 61-7-4046-7333, www.divers-den.com

No Photo
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Scubapro I & II 82 feet, 32 passengers, 16 cabins. Flynn Miln Thetford and Pellowes. Departs: Cairns. 3 days/2 nights. (011) 61-7-4031-5255, www.prodiver-cairns.com.au



Serica 75 feet, 6 passengers, 3 cabins. Raine Island, Great Detached Reef, Wreck Bay. Departs: Portland Roads. \$280-\$320/day (8 to 10 nights). (011) 61-7-40-938-900, www.serica-diveaustralia.com



Spirit of Freedom 115 feet, 28 passengers, 11 cabins, 11 in-room heads. Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea. Departs: Cairns, Hamilton Island and Gladstone. POA (Whole boat charter only, any length of trip). (011) 61-2-9555-5901, www.flagshipcharters.com.au/spiritoffreedom



Spoilsport 100 feet, 29 passengers, 15 cabins, 4 in-room heads. **Coral Sea** and **Yongala** wrecks. Departs: Townsville, Queensland, Australia. From \$257/day (6 or 7 days). (888) MIKE-BALL, www.mikeball.com

No Photo
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Supersport 90 feet, 26 passengers, 13 cabins, 4 in-room heads. Cod Hole and Great Barrier Reef. Departs: Cairns, Queensland. From \$213/day (3 dive days/3 night). (888) MIKE-BALL, www.mikeball.com



Taka II 72 feet, 27 passengers, 10 cabins, 3 in-room heads. Cod Hole, Great Barrier Reef and Osprey Reef, Coral Sea. Departs: Cairns. From AU\$765 (4 days), AU\$875 (5 days). (011) 61-7-4051-8722, www.takadive.com

No Photo
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True North 110 feet, 28 passengers, 15 cabins, 9 in-room heads. Rowley Shoals, Scott Reef, Serinapatam. Departs: Broome, Western Australia. From AU\$500 (5 days/6 nights & 9 days/10 nights). (011) 61-8-9192-1829, www.northstarcharters.com.au



M/V TUSA IV 72 feet, 14 passengers, 6 cabins. Northern Great Barrier Reef and Australia's Coral Sea Reefs. Departs: Cairns, North Queensland, Australia. Charter rates available on application. (Overnight to weeks duration). (011) 61-7-4031-2490, www.tusadive.com



Undersea Explorer 82 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins. Great Barrier Reef (Ribbon Reefs), Coral Sea and Osprey Reef. Departs: Port Douglas. AU\$2,450 (6 nights). (011) 61-7-4099-5911, www.undersea.com.au



Wind Cheetah 50 feet, 6 passengers, 3 cabins. Kangaroo Island, North Coast. Departs: Kangaroo Island. \$220/day (3 to 5 days). (011) 61-8-8559-3225, www.kidivingsafaris.com

Bahamas



Aqua Cat 102 feet, 22 passengers, 11 cabins, 11 in-room heads. Bahamas. Departs: Nassau, Bahamas. \$1,595/week (8 day/7 night), \$875 (5 day/4 night). (888) 327-9600, www.aquacatcruises.com



M/V Bottom Time II 90 feet, 28 passengers, 14 cabins. Bahamas, Dominican Republic. Departs: Fort Lauderdale, FL, and Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. \$1,395 to \$1,995/week (7 day/6 night). (800) 234-8464, www.bottomtimeadventures.com



M/V Cat Ppalu 65 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins. Bahamas. Departs: Nassau, Bahamas. All-inclusive charter rate \$12,500/week (7 day/6 night). (800) 327-9600, www.catppalucruises.com



Morning Star, Pirate's Lady & Sea Explorer 65 feet, 22 passengers, 4 cabin areas. Bahamas. Departs: Miami, FL. \$759 (7 day/6 night). (800) 327-9600, www.blackbeardcruises.com



Nekton Pilot 78 feet, 32 guests, 16 cabins, 16 in-room heads. Bahamas, **Belize**. Departs: Fort Lauderdale, FL, and Belize City, Belize. \$1,545 (7 days). (800) 899-6753, www.nektoncruises.com



Nekton Rorqual 78 feet, 34 guests, 17 cabins, 17 in-room heads. Bahamas, **Belize**. Departs: Fort Lauderdale, FL and Belize City, Belize. \$1,545 (7 days). (800) 899-6753, www.nektoncruises.com



M/V Ocean Explorer 55 feet, 10 passengers, 3 cabins, 2 in-room heads. Bahamas. Departs: Miami, FL, and Nassau, Bahamas. \$200/day (3 to 7 days). (800) 338-9383 www.oceanexplorerrinc.com



R/V Sea Dragon 70 feet, 8 or 9 passengers, 4 cabins, 2 in-room heads. Bahamas. Departs: Nassau, Bahamas and Georgetown Exuma. \$200/day (5 days to 2 weeks). (954) 522-0161 www.seadragonbahamas.com



M/Y Sea Fever 93 feet, 16 passengers, 7 cabins. Bahamas. Departs: Miami Beach, FL. \$150-\$200/day (3 to 7 days). (800) 443-3837, www.seafever.com



Shear Water 65 feet, 12 passengers, 3 cabins. Bahamas. Departs: West Palm Beach, FL. \$200/day (2 to 14 days). (888) 901-3483, www.scuba-adventures.com



Ultimate Getaway 100 feet, 20 passengers, bunk rooms. Dry Tortugas. Departs: Fort Meyers Beach, FL. \$184/day (4 to 5 days). (941) 466-3600, www.ultimategetaway.net

Baja, Mexico



Don Jose 80 feet, 14 to 20 passengers, 7 cabins. Sea of Cortez, Mexico. Departs: La Paz, Mexico. \$230-\$300/day (8 days). (800) 843-6967, www.bajaex.com



Solmar V 112 feet, 22 passengers, 12 cabins, 12 in-room heads. Socorro Islands and Sea of Cortez. Departs: Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. \$250-\$320/day (8 to 9 days). (800) 344-3349, www.solmar.com

Belize



Belize Aggressor III 110 feet, 18 passengers, 9 cabins, in-room heads. Turneffe Reef, Lighthouse Reef, Blue Hole. Departs: Belize City. \$285/day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com

British Columbia



Clavella 61 feet, 10 passengers, 4 cabins. Port Hardy, Queen Charlotte Strait, Seymour Inlet, Johnstone Strait, Gulf Islands. Departs: Port Hardy. \$129-\$199/day (3 to 7 days). (877) 725-2835, www.clavella.com



Nautilus Explorer 116 feet, 24 passengers, 12 cabins, 12 in-room heads. Port Hardy, Hakai Pass, Southeast Alaska, Vancouver Island. Departs: Vancouver, BC. \$150-\$200/day (4 to 14 days). (800) 4-DIVE BC, www.nautilusexplorer.com

British Virgin Islands



Cuan Law 105 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins, in-room heads. Also does trips in Leewards and Windwards. Departs: Road Town Tortola, BVI. \$322/day (6 nights/ 7 days). (800) 648 3393, www.BVIdiving.com

No Photo Available

J.O. Tobin 50 feet, 8 passengers, 4 cabins, 4 in-room heads. BVI. Departs: Tortola, BVI. \$1,195/wk (7 days / 6 nights). (936) 560-6794, www.sailcaribbeandivers.com

California



Conception 75 feet, 35 passengers, open berthing. Channel Islands. Departs: Santa Barbara, CA. \$135/day (1 to 5 days). (805) 962-1127, www.truthaquatics.com



Encore 80 feet, 35 passengers, 9 cabins. Southern Channel Islands. Departs: Long Beach, CA. \$86-\$125/day (1 to 10 days). (310) 541-1025, www.encodediveboat.com



Horizon 80 feet, 30 passengers, 8 cabins. Southern Channel Islands, Cortes Bank, Coronado Islands, San Bento Islands and Guadalupe Islands. Departs: San Diego, CA. \$1,700-\$3,400 (1 to 10 days). (858) 277-7823, e-mail: sddive@san.rr.com



Peace 65 feet, 32 passengers, bunk room. Channel Islands. Departs: Ventura, CA. \$65-\$130/day (1 to 4 days). (805) 643-6309, www.peaceboat.com

No Photo Available

Ocean Odyssey 85 feet, 32 passengers. Southern Channel Islands, Cortes Banks, Coronado Islands. Departs: San Diego, CA. \$1,600-\$2,800 (1 to 5 days). (858) 277-7823, sddive@san.rr.com



Truth 65 feet, 30 passengers, open berthing. Channel Islands. Departs: Santa Barbara, CA. \$135/day (1 to 5 days). (805) 962-1127, www.truthaquatics.com



Vision 80 feet, 35 passengers, open berthing. Channel Islands. Departs: Santa Barbara, CA. \$135/day (1 to 5 days). (805) 962-1127, www.truthaquatics.com

Cayman Islands



Cayman Aggressor IV 110 feet, 18 passengers, 9 cabins, in-room heads. Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, Cayman Brac. Departs: Georgetown, Grand Cayman. \$285/day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com

Costa Rica



Okeanos Aggressor 120 feet, 21 passengers, 10 cabins, in-room heads. Cocos Island. Departs: Puntarenas, Costa Rica. \$310/day (9 and 10 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com



Sea Hunter 115 feet, 18 passengers, 8 cabins, 8 in-room heads. Cocos and Malpelo Islands. Departs: Puntarenas, Costa Rica. \$300/day (10 to 15 days). (800) 203-2120, www.underseahunter.com



Undesee Hunter 90 feet, 14 passengers, 6 cabins, 4 in-room heads. Cocos Island. Departs: Puntarenas, Costa Rica. \$300/day (10 to 12 days). (800) 203-2120, www.underseahunter.com

Cuba



M/V Oceanus 100 feet, 14 passengers, 7 cabins. Cuba. Departs: Cancun, Mexico. \$1,795 (7 days). (011) 52-98-10-5707, www.oceanus.com.mx.com



Lammer Law 95 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Various itineraries all running back to Baltra. Departs: Baltra, Galapagos Islands. \$336-372/day (7,9,10,11 and 14 night). (800) 648 3393, www.galapagosdiving.com



M/Y Mistral II 74 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins, 4 in-room heads. Galapagos. Departs: Baltra. \$1,696 to \$1,995 (week). (800) 247-2925, www.quasarnautica.com



Sky Dancer 100 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Wolf and Darwin. Departs: Galapagos Islands (San Cristobal). \$2,695-\$2,895 (7 nights); \$3,795-\$3,995 (10 nights). (800) 932-6237, www.peterhughes.com

Fiji



Fiji Aggressor 106 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Namena, Wakaya, Gau. Departs: Nadi, Fiji. \$285/day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com



Lycanda 128 feet, 42 passengers, 21 cabins. Yasawa Islands. Departs: Lautoka. \$236/day (7 days/6 nights). (011) 679-663-938, www.bluelagooncruises.com



Nai'a 120 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, 8 in-room heads. All of Fiji waters, all of Tonga waters and around Kiribati waters. Departs: Lautoka in Fiji, and Nuku'alofa when in Tonga. \$385/day (7 or 10 days). (800) 903-0272, www.naia.com.fj



Nanuya Princess 161 feet, 50 passengers, 25 cabins. Yasawa Islands. Departs: Lautoka. \$236/day (7 day/6 night). (011) 679-663-938, www.bluelagooncruises.com



Princess II 85 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins, 6 in-room heads. Taveuni, Fiji. Departs: Nadi, Fiji. \$275/day (7 nights). (800) 576-7327, www.princessii.com



Sere ni wai 100 feet, 10 passengers, 5 cabins, in-room heads. All Fiji waters. Departs: Suva, Fiji. \$300/day (7 days). (011) 679-361-171, www.sere.com.fj

Florida



Playmate 60 feet, 11 passengers, 4 cabins. Dry Tortugas, Florida Keys. Departs: Key West, FL. \$225/day (3 to 6 days). (305) 744-9928, www.seaclusive.com



Ultimate Getaway 100 feet, 20 passengers, bunkbeds. Dry Tortugas. Departs: Fort Myers Beach, FL. \$184/day (4 to 5 days). (941) 466-3600, www.ultimategetaway.net

Galapagos



Galapagos Aggressor I & II 90 feet, 14 passengers, 7 cabins, in-room heads. Wolf, Darwin, Gordon, Plazas, Seymour Islands. Departs: Baltra. \$385 /day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com

Grenadines



M/V SeaHawk 90 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins, 6 in-room heads. Through the Grenadines to Bequia/St. Vincent. Departs: Grenada. \$236/day (7 days). (800) 736-7021, www.seahawkdive.com

Hawaii



Kona Aggressor II 80 feet, 10 passengers, 5 cabins, in-room heads. Hawaii's western coast. Departs: Kona, Hawaii. \$270/day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com

Honduran Bay Islands



Bay Islands Aggressor IV 120 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins, in-room heads. Utila, Cayos Cochinos, Guanaja. Departs: Roatan. \$256/day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com

Indonesia

No Photo Available

M/V Baruna Adventurer 100 feet, 18 passengers, 9 cabins, in-room heads. East Nusa Tenggara. Departs: Benoa Harbour, Bali. \$140/day (5 and 9 days). (62) 361-753820, www.baruna.com

No Photo Available

CISKA 74 feet, 8 to 10 passengers, 5 cabins. Wakatobi. Departs: Makassar, Ujung Pandang. From \$170/day (7 to 14 days). www.symbiosis-travel.com

No Photo Available

DEWI SRI 72 feet, 6 to 8 passengers, 4 cabins, in-room heads. Wakatobi. Departs: Makassar, Ujung Pandang. From \$200/day (7 to 14 days). www.symbiosis-travel.com



Komodo Dancer 100 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Bali, Komodo, Flores. Departs: Bali. \$1,795-\$1,995 (8 nights); \$2,495-\$2,695 (11 nights). (800) 932-6237, www.peterhughes.com



Oceanic Explorer 127 feet, 24 passengers, 12 cabins, in-room heads. Mapia, Numfor, Padaido (Sept. - Jan.); Bali to Komodo and Nusa Tenggara (March - June); Takabonerate, TukangBesi (Wakatobi) (June - Sept.). Departs: Bali, Biak and Makassar. \$220/day (10 or 11 days). (877) 348-3475, www.islandcruiseadventure.com



Pelagian 115 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins, in-room heads. Indonesia, Micronesia, PNG, Solomon Islands, Komodo, Bandasea. Departs: Bali. \$290-\$385/day (10 days, and 2 to 3 weeks). (800) 962-0395, www.dive-asiapacific.com



Sea Safari III 115 feet, 12 cabins, 12 in-room heads. Alor, Flores, Komodo, Bali, Kangean Islands. Departs: Bali. \$250-\$350/day (7 to 12 days). (011) 62-361-282-931, www.kararu.com

Maldives/Seychelles



Indian Ocean Explorer 115 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. Seychelles Inner Islands, Mahé to Aldabra, Aldabra and Southern Islands. Departs: Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles. \$250-\$325/day (7 to 14 nights). (888) 437-8456, www.IOExplorer.com



Madivaru 3 80 feet, 11 passengers, 4 cabins. Departs: Malé Airport. \$160-\$180/day (7 Days) (011) 39-039-329338, www.seafariadventures.com



Madivaru 7 100 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. Departs: Male' Airport. \$270-\$320/day (7, 9 OR 10 DAYS). (011) 39-039-329338, www.seafariadventures.com



Manthiri 85 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins, in-room heads. North and South Malé, Felidhe, Mulaku, North and South Nilandhe, Ari, North and South Malos Madulu, and Fadippolhu Atolls. Departs: Malé, Maldives. \$250-\$300/day (10 to 11 days). (877) 357-0022, www.manthiri.com

Palau



Big Blue Explorer 167 feet, 18 passengers, 9 cabin, in-room heads. All the famous dive sites of Palau. Departs: Koro, Palau. From \$243/day (8 days/7 nights). (877) 348-3475, www.palausecuba.com



Ocean Hunter 60 feet, 6 passengers, 3 cabins, 2 in-room heads. Reefs of Palau. Departs: Koror. From \$385-\$413/day (7 to 14 days). (011) 680-488-2637, www.oceanhunter.com



Palau Aggressor II 106 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Pelelieu and Rock Islands (German Channel, Ulong Channel, Jellyfish Lake, Blue Corner). Departs: Palau. From \$342/day (7 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com



Sun Dancer II 138 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins, in-room heads. Rock Islands, German Channel. Departs: Malakai Harbour, Koror. From \$2,395-\$2,495 (5 to 7 nights); \$3,295-\$3,395 (10 nights). (800) 932-6237, www.peterhughes.com

Panama



M/V Coral Star 115 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, 4 in-room heads. Both Atlantic/Caribbean and Pacific sides of Panama. Departs: David, Panama or Panama City. (8 days/7 nights) (800) 733-4742, www.coralstar.com

Papua New Guinea



M/V Barbarian II 45 feet, 6 passengers, 3 cabins. Anywhere within PNG waters. Departs: any port within PNG. From \$200/day. (011) 87-2761-339154, www.niuginidiving.com



M/V Chertan 60 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins. PNG. Departs: PNG. \$295/day (5 to 15 days). (011) 675-64-11167, www.chertan.com



M/V Golden Dawn 80 feet, 10 passengers, 5 cabins, 3 in-room heads. PNG. Departs PNG. From \$305-\$350/day (1 to 14 nights). (011) 61-145-119159, www.mvgoldendawn.com



Marlin 1 50 feet, 6 passengers, 3 cabins, 1 in-room head. Charter in Milne Bay. Departs: Alotau. From \$1,200 (5 to 30 days). (011) 61-145 117098, www.png-diveboat.com



M/V Moonlighting 50 feet, 6 passengers, 3 cabins, in-room head. Long, Crown, Bagabag, Karkar Islands, Purdies, Manus, Milne Bay, Hansa Bay. Departs: Madang. \$240-\$260/day (4, 7, 10, 12 days, plus customized). (011) 61-145-130880, www.blueseacharters.com



Paradise Sport 100 feet, 22 passengers, 11 cabins, 10 in-room heads. Milne Bay, (Oct. thru April). Kavieng, New Ireland and New Hanover (June thru Sept.). Departs: Milne Bay, From \$335/day (6 dive day/7 night, and 9 dive day/10 night). (888) MIKE BALL, www.mikeball.com



Star Dancer 120 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Father's Reef, Witu Islands. Departs: Raball or Walindi. \$2,095-\$2,195 (7 nights); \$2,995-\$3,095 (10 nights). (800) 932-6237, www.peterhughes.com



Telita 60 feet, 10 passengers, 6 cabins, 5 in-room heads. Alotau. Departs: Alotau. From \$300/day (6 to 14 days). www.telita.info.com



M/V Tiata 61 feet, 10 passengers, 5 cabins. Milne Bay, Kavieng. Departs: Mainly Alotau, Kavieng and Rabaul. From \$340/day (10 nights). (011) 61-7-40-938-900, www.bomatu.com

Pemba Island, Africa



M/Y KISIWANI 67 foot, 10 passengers, 5 cabins, 1 ensuite cabin, 2 further heads. Pemba Island. Departs: Shimoni, Kenya or Mkoani, Pemba. From \$1,250/week (one week). (011) 254-127-52016/7, www.pembadiving.com

Philippines



Island Explorer 116 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Tubataha and Malapascua. Departs: Puerto Princesa, Palawan and CEBU. From \$200/day (5 to 10 days). (877) 348-3475, www.islandcruiseadventure.com



Ghazala II 67feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins, 3 in-room heads. Straits of Tiran, Ras Mohammed, Shab Mahmoud (wreck of Dunraven), Shab Ali (wreck of *Thistlegorm*), Shag Rock, Shab Abu Nuhas (3 additional wrecks). Departs: Sharm el Sheikh. From \$90/day (5 to 7 days). (011) 20-69-600697, www.sinaidivers.com

Red Sea/Africa



M/V Cyclone 105 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins, in-room heads. North, South, Deep South (St. Johns), Brothers Island, Marine park. Departs: Sharm El Sheikh, Hurghada, Al Quseir, Marsa Alam. (7-14 days). (011) 20-69-661216, www.scubaredsea.com



M/V Oyster 105 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins, 10 in-room heads. All the Egyptian Red Sea. Departs: Hurgada , Sharm and Mersalam. From \$885 (7 nights). (011) 202-33-60-244, www.oysterdiving.com



Empress Theresa 85 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. Southern Route, including Elphinstone, Sattaya, Fury Shoal and St Johns. Departs: Marsa Alum, Egypt. From \$130/day (7 nights). (011) 2-069-601734, www.emperordivers.com



Red Sea Aggressor 120 feet, 18 passengers, 9 cabins, in-room heads. Ras Mohamed, Thistlegorm, Shedwan or Red Sea charters, Salem Express, Brothers Islands, Tobia or Brothers Charters. Departs: Sharma El Sheikh, Egypt and Hurghada, Egypt. From \$270/day (7 and 10 days). (800) 348-2628, www.aggressor.com



Emperor Mahy 85 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. North of Sharm El Sheikh to Gulf of Suez, wreck of the *Thistlegorm* and Abu Nuhas. Straits of Tiran. Departs: Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. From \$110/day (7 nights). (011) 2-069-6017-34, www.emperordivers.com



No Photo Available



Emperor Pegasus 85 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. North of Hurghada to Straits of Gubal and Abu Nuhas. South of Hurghada to Sagfaga area. Departs: Hurghada, Egypt. From \$110/day (7 nights). (011) 2-069-6017-34, www.emperordivers.com



No Photo Available




Ghazala I 80 feet, 16 passengers, 6 cabins, 3 in-room heads. Straits of Tiran, Ras Mohammed, Shab Mahmoud (wreck of Dunraven), Shab Ali (wreck of *Thistlegorm*), Shag Rock, Shab Abu Nuhas (3 additional wrecks). Departs: Sharm el Sheikh. From \$120/day (7 days). (011) 20-69-6006-97, www.sinaidivers.com



WildCat 97 feet, 14 passengers, 7 cabins, 8 in-room heads. North, South. Departs: Sharm El-Sheikh. From \$140/day (1 week). www.redseadiving.com

Taba II (Kewet Salem) 59 feet, 20 for day cruises/8 overnight, 3 cabins. Red Sea. Departs: Taba, Sinai, Egypt. \$99/day (1 to 8 days). (011) 972-8-6334404, www.aqua-sport.com







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Saba



M/V Caribbean Explorer 100 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. Saba, St. Kitts. Departs: St. Maarten. From \$185/day (7 nights/8 days). (800) 322-3577, www.explorerventures.com

Solomon Islands



M/V Bilikiki 125 Feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins, 10 in-room heads. Florida Islands, Russell Islands and Marovo Lagoon. Departs: Honiara, Solomon Islands. From \$296/day (7 to 14 days). (800) 663-5363, www.bilikiki.com



M/V Spirit of Solomons 125 feet, 26 passengers, 13 cabins, 7 in-room heads. Florida and Russell Islands and Marovo Lagoon. Departs: Honiara, Solomon Islands. From \$249-\$296/day (7 to 14 days). (800) 663-5363, www.bilikiki.com

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M/V Fling 100 feet, 34 passengers. Flower Garden Banks, Stetson Bank, offshore oil rigs. Departs: Freeport, TX. \$140/day (2 to 4 days). (979) 233-4445, www.rinnboats.com



M/V Sea Searcher II 95 feet, 18 passengers, 4 cabins. Texas Flower Gardens. Departs: Freeport, TX. Prices set by dive shops who charter. (3 to 5 days). (800) 396-3483, www.seasearcherii.com



M/V Spree 100 feet, 34 passengers. Flower Garden Banks, Stetson Bank, offshore oil rigs. Departs: Freeport, Texas. \$140/day (2 to 4 days). (979) 233-4445, www.rinnboats.com



M/V Atlantis I 89 feet, 10 passengers, 6 cabins, in-room heads. Hin Daeng, Phi-Phi Islands, Similan and Richelieu Rock. Departs: Patong Beach, Phuket. From \$155 to \$185/day (2 to 6 days). (011) 66-76-344-850, www.atlantis-asia.com



M/V Atlantis X 89 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Similan and Richelieu Rock. Departs: Patong Beach, Phuket. From \$130/day (4 to 6 days). (011) 66-76-344-850, www.atlantis-asia.com



M/Y Bunmee 1 86 feet, 20 passengers, 11 cabins, 2 in-room heads. Similan and Surin Islands—Richelieu Rock and Southern Islands. Departs: Phuket or Rangong. From \$120-\$150/day (3 days/3nights, 4 days/5 nights, 8 days/8nights). (011) 66-76-331006, www.andamanscuba.com



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M/V Catch Up 82 feet, 14 passengers, 7 cabins. Similan, Richelieu Rock, Burma. Departs: Tap Lamu (North of Phuket). \$110/day (3 to 4 days). (011) 66-76-344-337, www.high-class-adventure.com/highclass



Crescent 66 feet, 8 passengers, 4 cabins, in-room heads. Mergui Archipelago, Myanmar. Departs: Kawthoung. \$1,620 (full boat charter, 7 days/8 nights). (0110) 66-76-340-406, www.seal-asia.com



Dive Asia I 75 feet, 20 passengers, 10 cabins. Similan and Surin Marine National Parks. Departs: Chalong Bay, Phuket. From \$570 (4 days) and \$970 (7 days). (011) 66-76330598, www.diveasia.com

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M/V Andaman Seafarer 74 feet, 14 passengers, 5 cabins, 2 showers/toilets. Similan, Shrin, Richelieu Rock; Hin Daeng, Hin Muang, Similan. Departs: Phuket. From \$150-\$180/day, (5 and 7 days, and 3 to 10 day private cruises). (011) 66-76-280-644, www.seafarer-divers.com



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Gaea 52 feet (trimaran), 8 passengers, 5 cabins. Mergui Archipelago, Myanmar. Departs: Kawthoung. \$1,200 (full boat charter, 5 days/6 nights). (00) 66-76-340-406, www.seal-asia.com



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request only). Departs: Patong (November-May) and Tab Lamu (July thru October). From \$200/day (4 days/5 nights). (011) 66-76-342186, www.thejunk.com



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MV Marco Polo 75 feet, 14 passengers, 7 cabins. Similans, Kho Bon, Richelieu Rock, Kho Tada. Departs: Ao Chalong/Phuket. \$130-150/day (6 days).

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MV Mermaid II 108 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins. Similan Richelieu Rock and south Hin Deang. Departs: Phuket. From \$165/day (2 days/3 night, 4 days/4 nights, 6 days/7 nights). (011) 66-76-341595, www.seaworld-phuket.com



Ocean Rover 100 feet, 16 passengers, 8 cabins, in-room heads. Thailand/Indonesia. Departs: Phuket for Thailand; Bali for Indonesia. \$295.00/day Thailand/Burma (7 to 10 days); Indonesia (10 days/11 nights). (011) 66-76-295-511, www.fantasea.net



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MV Scuba Adventure 79 feet, 12 passengers, 6 cabins. Similan and Surin Islands, Richelieu Rock. Departs: Tab Lamu, Phuket. \$120/day (4 days/4 nights). (011) 66-76-293-120, www.scubacat.com



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Seraph 62 feet, 8 passengers, 4 cabins, 2 in-room heads. Similan Islands/Surin Islands. Departs: Phuket, Thailand. From \$187/day (5 to 7 days). (011) 66-76-281-299, www.phuketdive.net



MV Shortcut 2 95 feet, 15 passengers, 8 cabins. Similan, Richelieu Rock, Burma. Departs: Tap Lamu (North of Phuket). \$225/day (5 to 8 days). (011) 66-76-344-337, www.highclass-adventure.com/shortcut

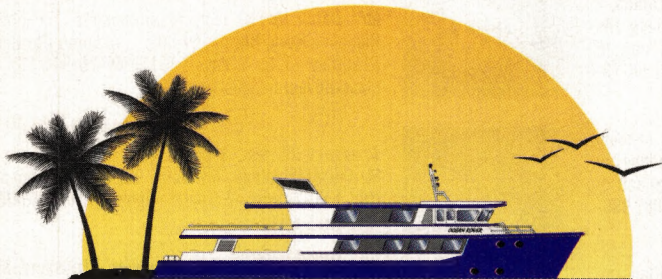


Wanderlust 52 feet (trimaran), 8 passengers, 5 cabins. Similan & Surin Islands. Departs: Phuket. From \$1,300 (full boat charter) (6 days/7nights). (011) 66-76 340 406, www.seal-asia.com



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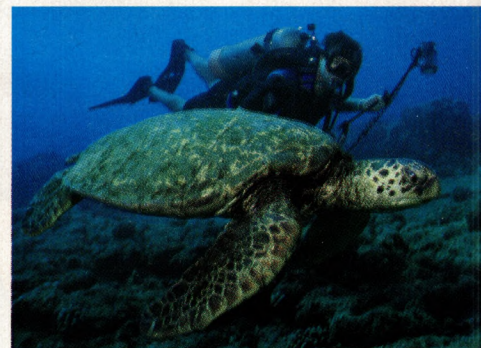


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But for all I've seen, for everything I've done and all the places I've visited, there is one experience that is always new, always changing and always makes me wonder and, sometimes, laugh out loud. Every time I meet with a group of kids I'm reminded of why I and so many other people work so hard to preserve the beauty of our natural world. Mention the ocean to a child and their eyes light up. Ask them about whales or dolphins or sea turtles, and you'll get a litany of facts, figures and explanations. Children accept our world unconditionally. When they're happy, it shows. When they're dissatisfied with the state of things, they'll let you know.

I got a glimpse of this recently during a visit to a second grade class at Marian Bergeson Elementary School in Laguna Niguel, CA. I was lucky enough to talk with a group of bright, funny kids right after they had taken part in a clean-up project at a nearby southern California beach.

OPPOSITE PHOTO: GARY FIRSTENBERG



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BLUE ADVENTURES for Kids



BY WYLAND

Even at 7 years old, the kids were learning how important it is to become a caretaker for the environment. Being a curious person, I wanted to hear their take on some of these weighty issues. My "panel" included Johnny, Cassidy, Sarah F. and Sarah G., Matt, and Jenna—all bubbling at the idea of sharing their thoughts with the readers of this magazine.

The first thing we had to decide was who would answer my questions. Sarah, the most outgoing of the group, thought the first person who slammed their hand down on the table, "like they do in 'Family Feud,'" should be given the honor of responding. We tried this a few times, and then moved on to the more democratic approach of taking turns. With the new ground rules firmly in place—for the time being, anyway—I asked the group to start the discussion by naming a few different types of bodies of water. The answers came fast and furious: "The Ocean!" "A River!" "Lakes!" "Streams!" "Ponds!"... "Fresno!"

The last answer came from Matt.

"Fresno?" I asked.

"Fresno has water," he said proudly.

I couldn't argue with his logic. Fresno does have water. I'm pretty sure of that.

I could see I was in good hands. Clearly, this was an advanced group. So I upped the ante and moved in with a real hardball question. Pollution is something that I often talk about when I meet with kids. They have very strong opinions on the subject and, in fact, they can be very persuasive in encouraging adults to curtail environmentally damaging habits. All it takes is one withering look from a little kid to make you pick up your chewing

gum wrappers for the rest of your life.

"How can adults take more responsibility for the environment?" I asked.

Cassidy's hand shot up.

"Don't litter," she said. "And don't waste water...I turn off the water when I'm brushing my teeth."

"Yes," I said, "that's important." I tried to remember if I had turned off my faucet that morning. I imagined the lecture these guys would give me if I had left the water running.

Next, we talked about the types of trash they saw during their beach clean up experience. Apparently, the beach that day was littered with plastic water bottles, styrofoam, grocery bags, cigarette butts and beer cans. The kids asked me how adults could be so forgetful.


"That trash washes out to sea," Johnny said. "Fish eat it."

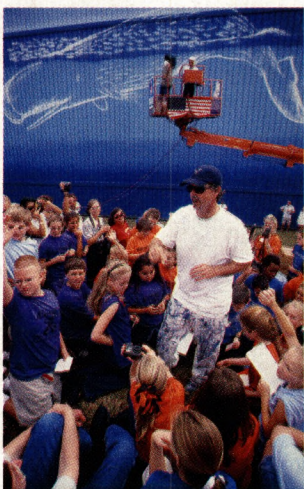
"But they don't like it," Jenna said. "If I were a dolphin and saw someone dropping trash in my home I'd think that's not fair."

Sarah F. said when a dolphin sees trash, "...it probably wants to swim away to someplace cleaner...probably farther out to sea, where we'll never get to see it again."

I asked if any of them had seen really polluted water. The answer was a mixture of yes and no's. Matt, who judging by his T-shirt was an active member of the Indian Guides, said he'd seen a dirty lake in Idaho once. He said the water was hard to see through. "It's kind of smoky looking...and it smells," he said.

When I asked what dirty water smells like, Sarah G. said, "Polluted water smells like dirty socks." She volunteered to take off her shoes to demonstrate.

I told her that I got the point. 



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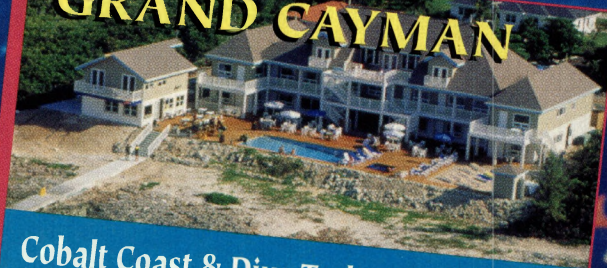
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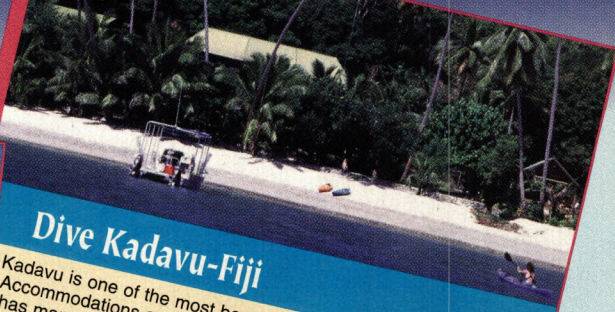
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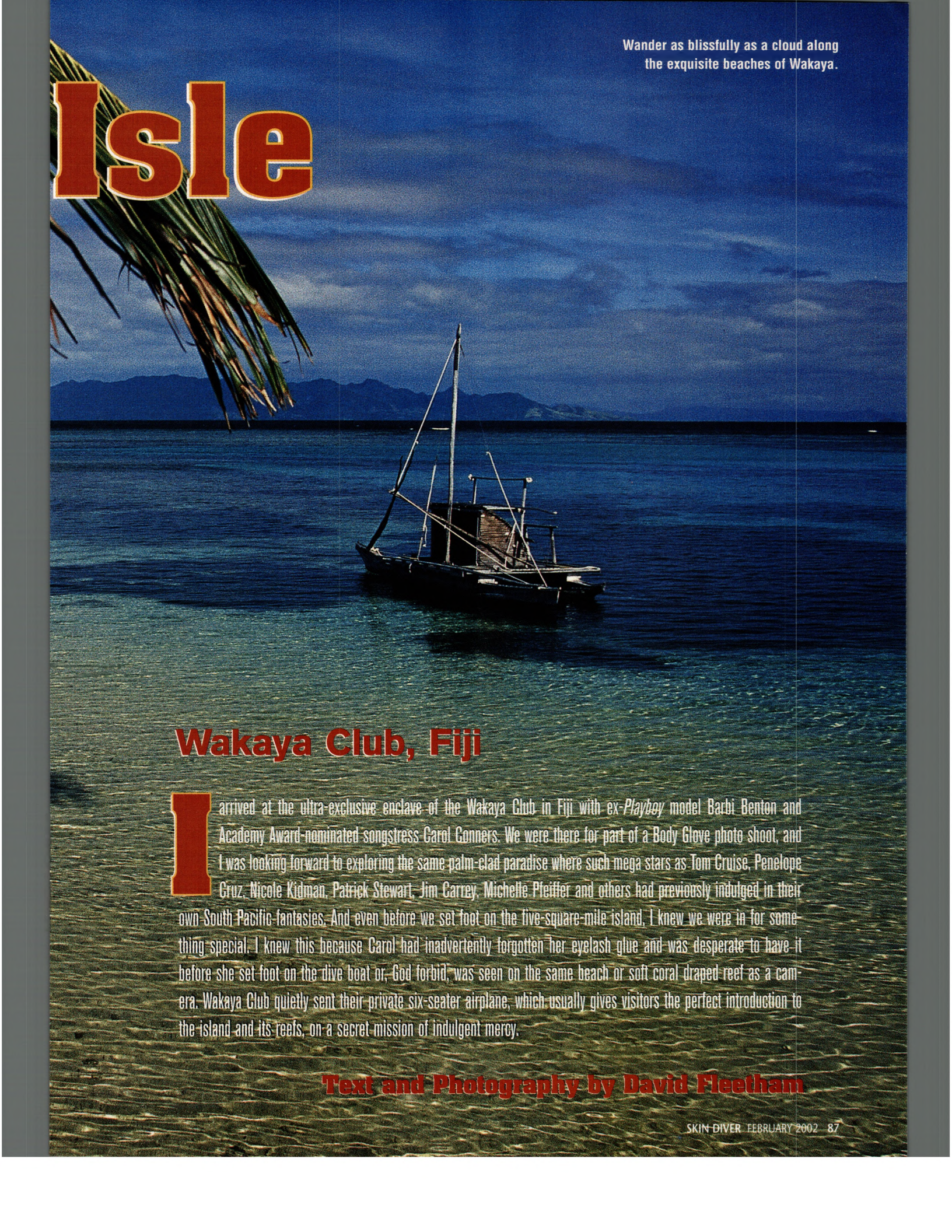
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Enchanted

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a tropical beach. In the foreground, the dark, silhouetted fronds of palm trees hang down from the top, creating a frame-like effect. Below them, the ocean stretches to the horizon under a clear blue sky. The beach itself is visible in the lower half, with long, dark shadows of palm trees cast across the sand and shallow water. The overall mood is serene and idyllic.

We all dream of the ultimate getaway—just offshore the diving stirs your soul and topside your every need and whim is met in surroundings that instantly take you away from life's stress and engulf you in bliss. At these retreats your escape is as complete, pure and effortless as breathing. This month we take you to the corners of the blue world that will soon inhabit your dreams. Places where the statement, *Your every desire is our command*, is an essential element of the staff's mantra. And, the diving is nothing short of exhilarating.



Wander as blissfully as a cloud along
the exquisite beaches of Wakaya.

Isle

Wakaya Club, Fiji

I arrived at the ultra-exclusive enclave of the Wakaya Club in Fiji with ex-*Playboy* model Barbi Benton and Academy Award-nominated songstress Carol Conners. We were there for part of a Body Glove photo shoot, and I was looking forward to exploring the same palm-clad paradise where such mega stars as Tom Cruise, Penelope Cruz, Nicole Kidman, Patrick Stewart, Jim Carrey, Michelle Pfeiffer and others had previously indulged in their own South Pacific fantasies. And even before we set foot on the five-square-mile island, I knew we were in for something special. I knew this because Carol had inadvertently forgotten her eyelash glue and was desperate to have it before she set foot on the dive boat or, God forbid, was seen on the same beach or soft coral draped reef as a camera. Wakaya Club quietly sent their private six-seater airplane, which usually gives visitors the perfect introduction to the island and its reefs, on a secret mission of indulgent mercy.

Text and Photography by David Fleetham

Enchanted Isle

A few hours later, a staffer landed on the grass strip, eyelash glue in hand, and with perfect aplomb, personally delivered it, along with some Taitinger champagne and flowers to mitigate the suffering the missing substance had caused. All was well, and public life was once again restored for the notoriously camera-happy Carol. Her relief was palpable, and we quickly realized that her request was not the most challenging the staff of 130 helpful, friendly Fijians had had to fulfill for its star-studded clientele.

The Wakaya Club has only nine traditional Fijian cottages (*bures*) hidden among the native flora. They are immaculate, each with A/C, gleaming plank floors, spacious living room, unlimited use wet bar, oversized tub and lava rock-walled



Palm Grove Pavilion is the social hub of Wakaya.

shower, sunset beach views, and a king-size, four poster bed so comfortable I could have easily spent my entire stay in its embrace. The tennis court comes complete with a tennis pro, and the lonely strips of beach, tropical spa and massage help ease the strain of life away. It was easy to see why so many of Hollywood's who's who had slipped away to relax here. To complete the getaway, television and telephones are not to be found in the rooms.

Diving in Wakaya is a very personal affair. George, a native Fijian, accompanied me on my dives. A veteran of the local reefs, his knowledge and keen eye made each hour underwater a visual banquet. And, every site was a one- to five-minute boat ride away—hardly time to feel the normal thrill

of pre-dive anticipation.

Our favorite was the Manta cleaning station. Every morning at eight sharp, a Manta Ray waited for the first divers of the day. The Mantas would hover over a pyramid-shaped coral head perched on the edge of the drop-off that came within 15 feet of the surface. A cloud of anthias formed a



Fiji's reefs house macro creatures in an extraordinary variety and abundance. Here, a tiny crab forages on a sea fan.

living crown at the coral peak and would part as the Manta attempted to hover, while being attended by tiny cleaner wrasse and butterflyfish. On subsequent visits we also saw tiny cowries with red mantles on red gorgonian coral, jellyfish from the open ocean that had drifted in, along with a huge Dogtooth Tuna. The one day we arrived at the site late, the ray had gone off somewhere, probably to call its agent and demand more attention be paid to its important schedule.

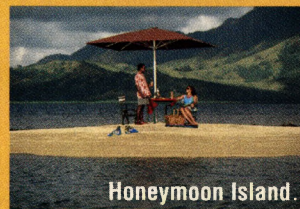
Several of the Mantas had large crescent-shaped divots missing from the trailing edge of their wings. George said that Great and Scalloped Hammerheads are seen on some of Wakaya's dives.

The reefs around the island offer everything from sheltered snorkeling to deep walls with huge gorgonian fans. On the off-

Nukubati: A Secret Island Enclave in the North

Nestled inside the Great Sea Reef off Vanua Levu, the private island of Nukubati is another of Fiji's ultimate temptations for divers looking for an exclusive hideaway. With access by seaplane and a maximum of 14 guests and 40 friendly staff, you will feel as if you have been castaway in a south seas dream world. Of course, nearly everything is included—meals, beverages, snorkeling (additional charge for scuba), private island picnics, local village visits and more. Or, you can just soak up the romance and follow your whims.

The diving is among the best in Fiji and so unexplored and pristine you will even have the opportunity to name your own site. In fact, Nukubati is the only resort on the remote north coast, so you're almost guaranteed to have the reefs to yourself. Each morning, a dive boat backs up to the beach just steps from your luxurious, yet simple, *bure*. In order to dive, all you do is climb out of bed, stretch and walk about ten steps to the boat. The dive sites have a dazzling abundance of sea life—massive sea fans, kaleidoscope-colored soft corals and a fascinating spectrum of creatures from shockingly gaudy nudibranchs to Manta Rays.



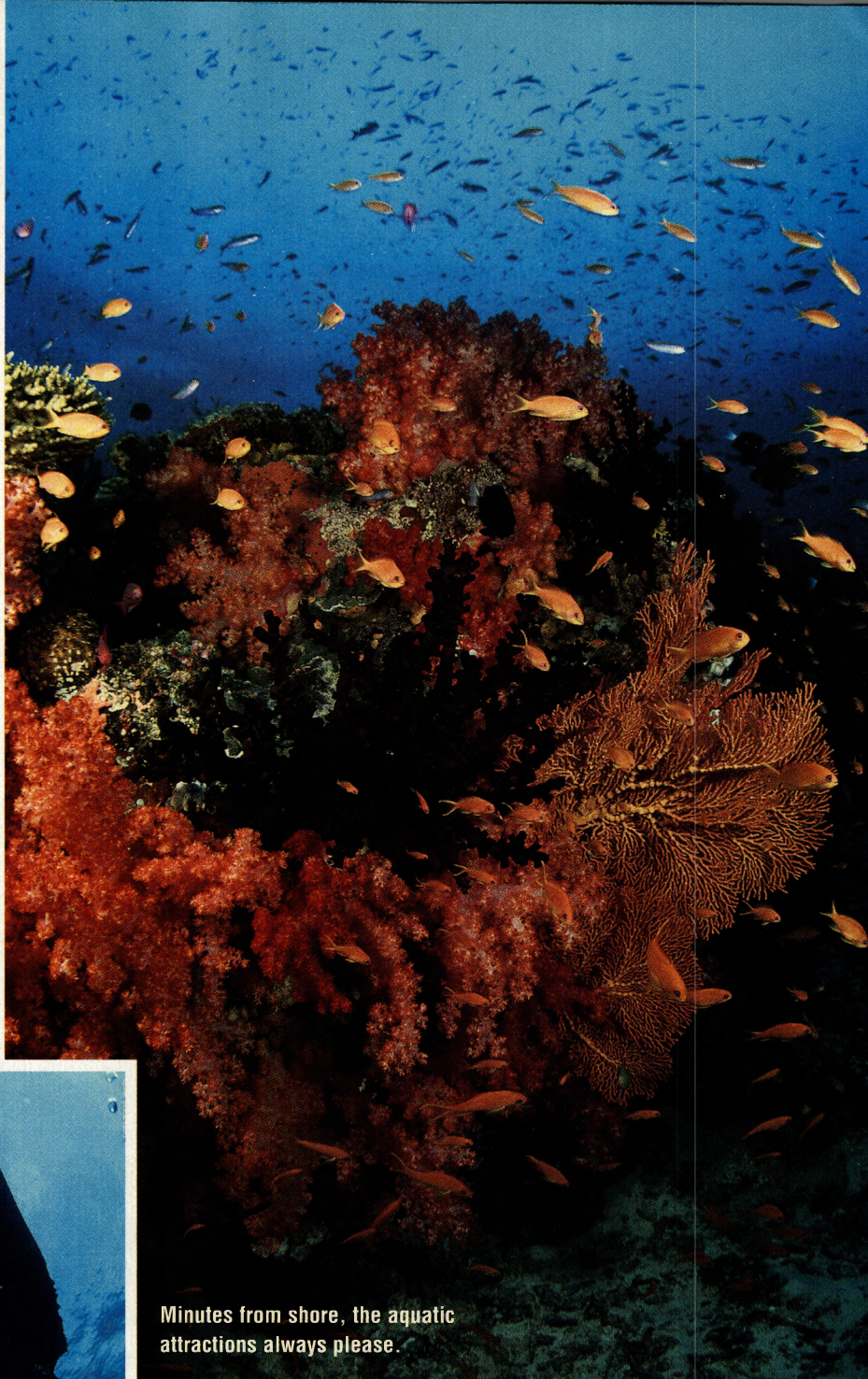
Honeymoon Island.

shore side of the main pass, we encountered the most current, and also the most diverse abundance of marine life. A ledge at 80 feet is home to several Blue Ribbon Eels, and just below them is a rubble zone where, for the first time, I was able to capture four different species of dartfish on film on the same dive. Clusters of whip coral colonies adorn fingers of reef that extend from the drop-off and gorgonian fans with resident Longnose Hawkfish color the sides of crevices that lead up to the top of the wall. Highlights include a sandy sea of garden eels, clouds of anthias over crimson soft coral reefs and huge lionfish that are as fearless as their namesake.

After each dive, Carol would croon the word, "Puuuurrrfect." It was a word of her own making, which we all quickly took to.

All of this makes it difficult to remove your regulator, but when you do, the options seem endless. The island is crawling with wildlife, including monkeys, wild pigs, horses, colorful birds and fallow deer. For golfers, a nine-hole course winds through a 19th century coconut grove (watch for falling coconuts). For seclusion or romance, a staff member will strand you at a private beach for the day, complete with gourmet picnic lunch and a phone to call with when you're ready to return.

Dinner is served under the 60-foot-high ceilings of the Palm Grove Pavilion, which also contains ancestral war clubs, other



Minutes from shore, the aquatic attractions always please.




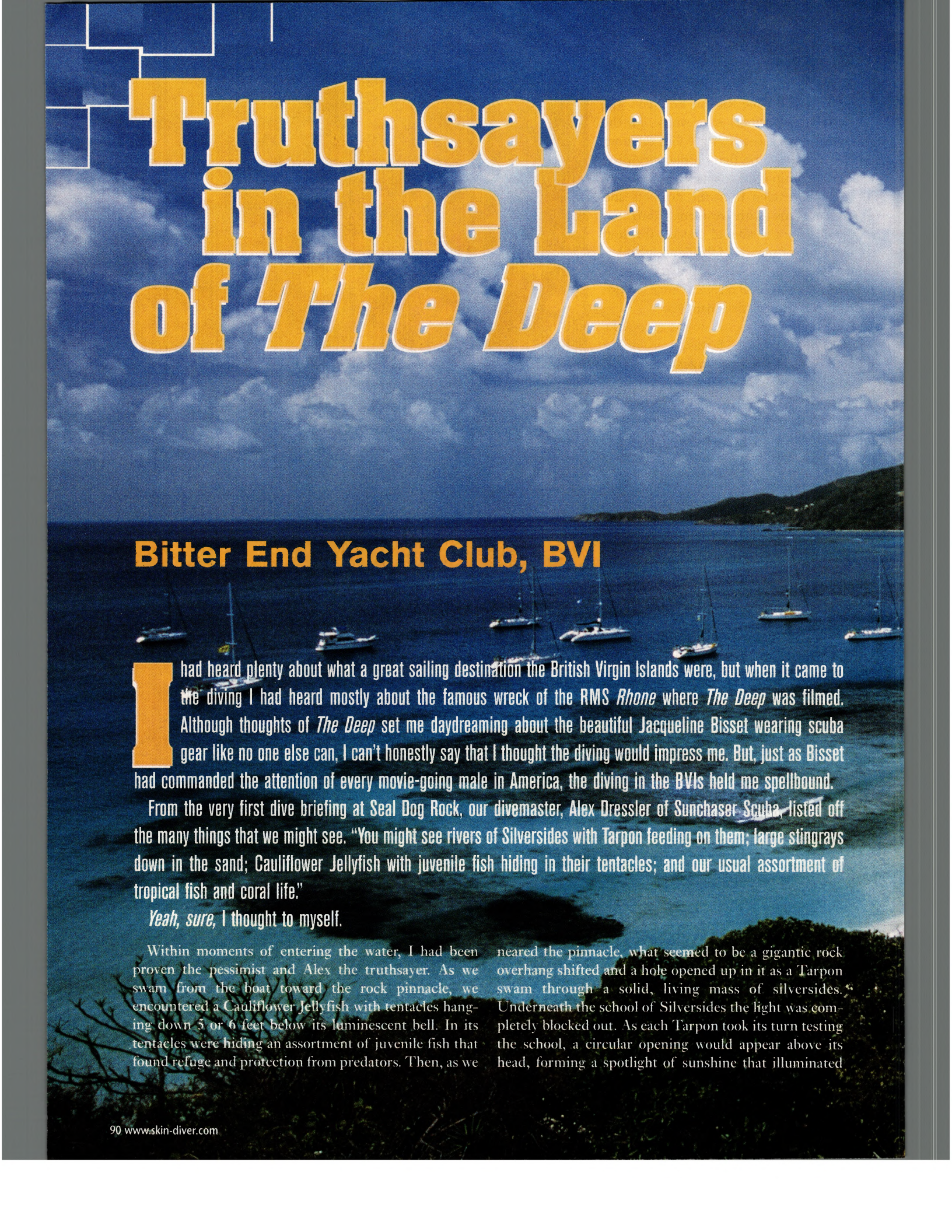
The 8:00 AM Manta.

Fijian artifacts and art, and of course, the sunken bar where guests mingle before dining.

For the most part, the staff are all native Fijians who live on Wakaya with their families. Their village contains a school and 19th century style church, which is open to guests on Sunday. One evening a week guests can gather for a *meke* and *lovo*. This is a traditional Fijian dance, followed by a feast of native foods wrapped in banana leaves and

cooked over hot stones buried in the sand. To add to the festivities, Barbi and Carol borrowed a guitar and joined the band for a couple of numbers.

The quality of the diving kept me in the water on most days, although Barbi managed to humble me at tennis on our final day. She and Carol did several of the hikes around Wakaya, returning with stories of ancient Fijian ruins, wild horses and deer, and a rocky cliff known as The Chieftains Leap. It is accurate to say that none of us went home having seen everything, but by the last day, Carol's catch word "puu-urrrfect" had begun to echo among the coconut palms.  Special thanks to Wakaya Club, World of Diving, Nukubati, Sun Air, Air New Zealand and Body Glove.



Truthsayers in the Land of *The Deep*

Bitter End Yacht Club, BVI

I had heard plenty about what a great sailing destination the British Virgin Islands were, but when it came to the diving I had heard mostly about the famous wreck of the RMS *Rhone* where *The Deep* was filmed. Although thoughts of *The Deep* set me daydreaming about the beautiful Jacqueline Bisset wearing scuba gear like no one else can, I can't honestly say that I thought the diving would impress me. But, just as Bisset had commanded the attention of every movie-going male in America, the diving in the BVIs held me spellbound.

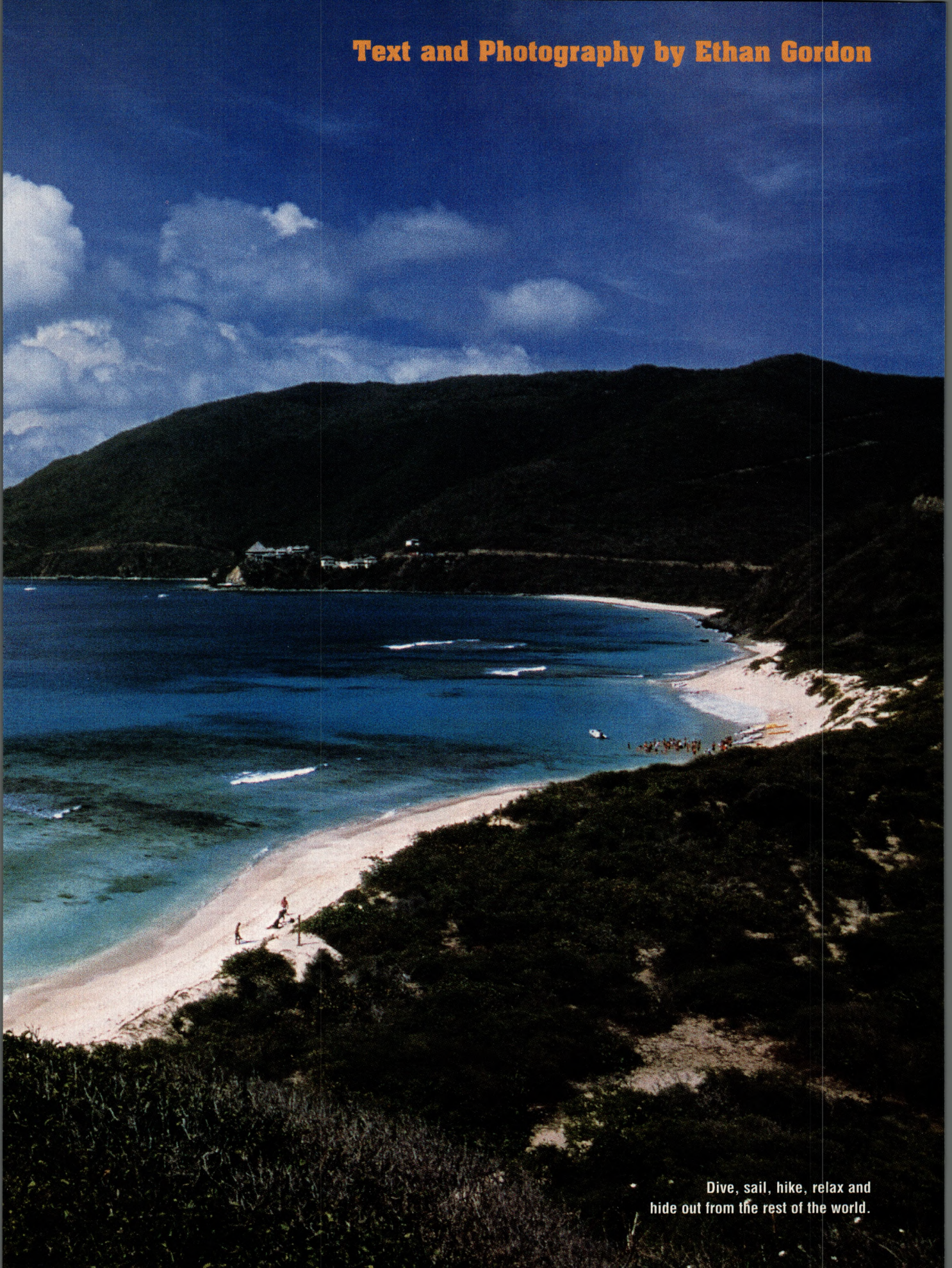
From the very first dive briefing at Seal Dog Rock, our divemaster, Alex Dressler of Sunchaser Scuba, listed off the many things that we might see. "You might see rivers of Silversides with Tarpon feeding on them; large stingrays down in the sand; Cauliflower Jellyfish with juvenile fish hiding in their tentacles; and our usual assortment of tropical fish and coral life."

Yeah, sure, I thought to myself.

Within moments of entering the water, I had been proven the pessimist and Alex the truthsayer. As we swam from the boat toward the rock pinnacle, we encountered a Cauliflower Jellyfish with tentacles hanging down 5 or 6 feet below its luminescent bell. In its tentacles were hiding an assortment of juvenile fish that found refuge and protection from predators. Then, as we

neared the pinnacle, what seemed to be a gigantic rock overhang shifted and a hole opened up in it as a Tarpon swam through a solid, living mass of silversides. "Underneath the school of Silversides the light was completely blocked out. As each Tarpon took its turn testing the school, a circular opening would appear above its head, forming a spotlight of sunshine that illuminated

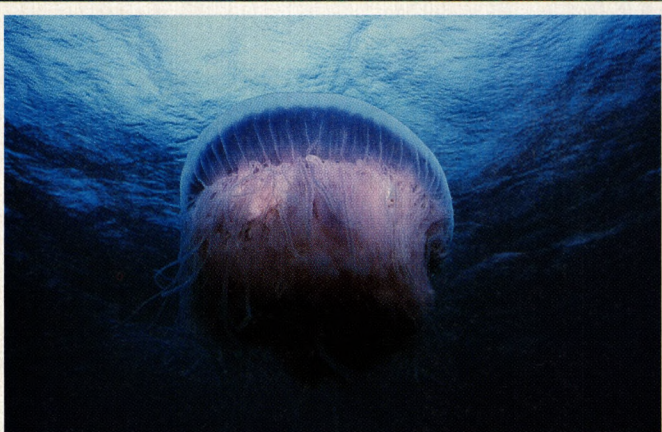
Text and Photography by Ethan Gordon



Dive, sail, hike, relax and
hide out from the rest of the world.

Truthsayers in the Land of The Deep

A Tarpon prowls a spectacular buffet of Silversides. Below: Beauty both dangerous (Cauliflower Jellyfish) and sublime (orchid).



the Tarpon's silvery scales. Joining the Tarpon in their assault on the silversides were jacks and snapper. Fifty feet below, from their resting places in the white sand bottom, large stingrays watched the drama unfold above. And yes, there was quite an assortment of tropical fish and coral life.

At the wreck of the *Rhone*, Alex said we might see jawfish, schools of grunts and snapper, and a propeller that would make a diver look like a flea on an elephant's back. He again came through with all as promised. The jawfish posed politely for the camera, as did the abundant schools of fish. In fact, there was a Spanish Hogfish that should have been named a "camera hogfish." It wouldn't leave me alone, often posing so close to the lens I couldn't focus.

Of course, the *Rhone* lived up to all of its expectations.

Lying in 75 feet of water, she is a gorgeous wreck that wears her years of marine growth well. Despite having sunk in 1867 and more recently having been blown apart because of the navigation hazard she posed, parts of her are still remarkably intact. As good a dive as this was, there was another, lesser known wreck that really opened my eyes to diving the BVIs.

One morning Alex greeted me with a big smile. "Guess where we're going today?" he asked, then answered, "The *Chikuzen*."

The *Chikuzen* is a 250-foot refrigerator ship that used to support the Japanese fishing fleet until it was abandoned and intentionally set adrift. After posing a threat to several islands as it meandered around the Caribbean, the ghost ship finally sank about seven and a half miles north of Tortola on a flat, white

sand bottom in 75 feet of water. She rests on her port side and is almost completely intact. So far from land, divers are at the mercy of the open ocean when they attempt to dive her. Half of the dive trips planned to this wreck have to be rescheduled due to the ocean conditions, but luck was on our side. We had calm seas and sunny skies.

After we made the 45-minute boat ride out, Alex began his

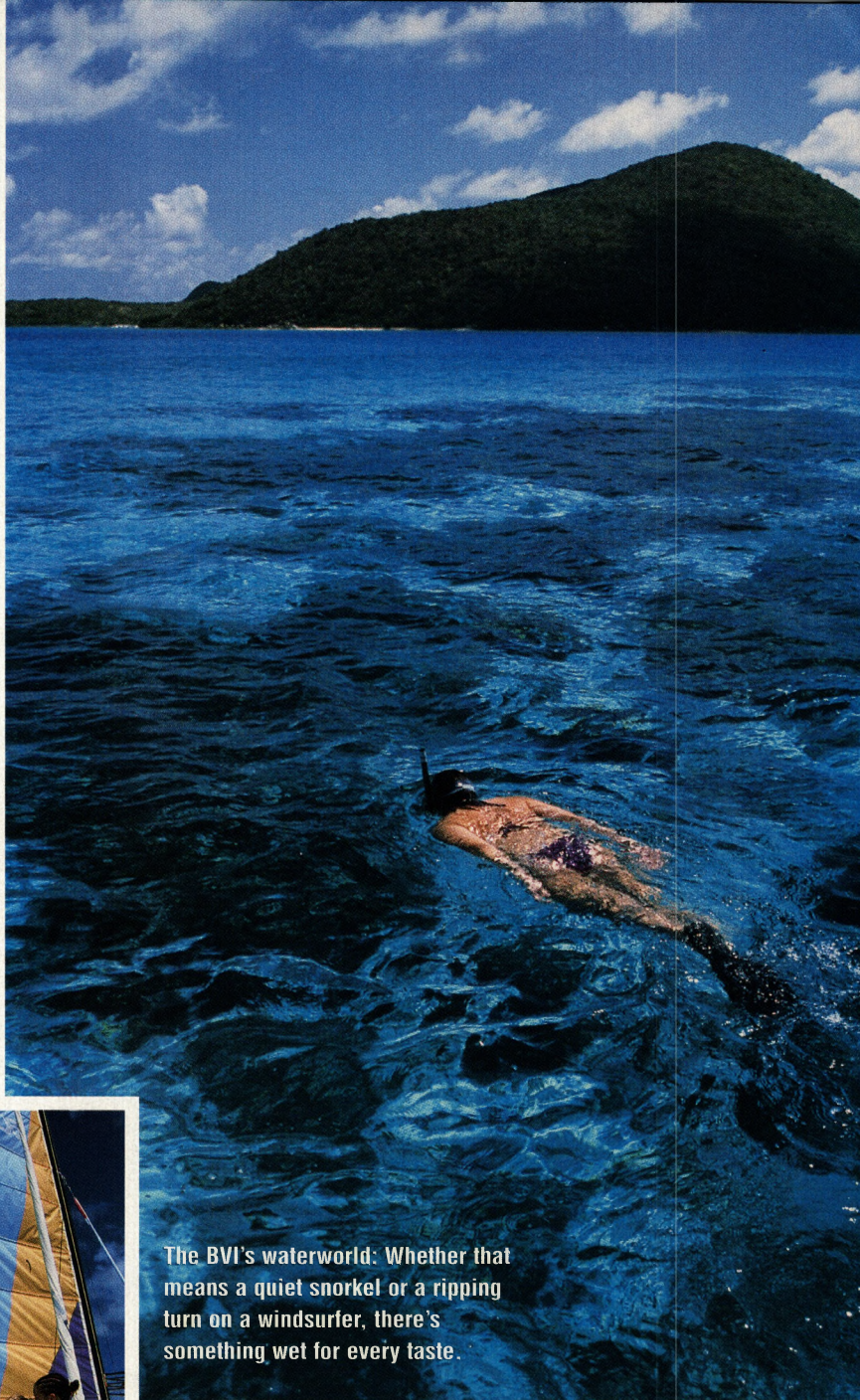


briefing. "On this dive we have the potential to see reef sharks, a 300-pound Goliath Grouper (formerly known as a Jewfish), schools of barracuda, Cobia, stingrays and huge schools of fish that stay close to the wreck." Alex was beaming. I had seen enough to know that Alex may very well be the Pied Piper of sea creatures in the BVIs, but this new list was a very tall order.

We wasted no time and jumped into the water, where we were immediately greeted by a school of barracuda. Next, we had begun our descent down the mooring line when I spotted a reef shark swimming a wide perimeter around the wreck. Nearing the base of the mooring, we noticed something quite large that seemed to be attached to the mooring chain. Later, Alex said that the divemasters have a tradition of tying something strange like a shoe to the mooring chain to leave for the next visitor to find, but this time it looked like they had left an engine block. It turned out to be a 300-pound Goliath Grouper waiting to greet us. This immense grouper accompanied us as we swam over the white sandy bottom covered with stingrays and through dense schools of Tomtate (a variety of grunt), while we explored the outside of this ghostly wreck. Another resident of the *Chikuzen* that we encountered—a 5-foot barracuda—was so brazen, I could have touched my camera lens to its nose. Just to round out the dive, the occasional Cobia swam past. Once again, Alex scored a perfect 10.

During some of the few moments that I was dry, I visited the beautiful rock formations of The Baths and drove through the lush hillsides of Virgin Gorda where I was presented with one after another breathtaking vista of white sugar beaches and hidden coves. Virgin Gorda is a beautiful island with plenty to explore, but I was happy simply relaxing at the Bitter End Yacht Club.

Available to all of the guests at the Bitter End, is an armada of boats ranging from 11-foot Boston Whalers to windsurfers to a variety of sailboats from Sunfish to Freedom 30s. The use of most of these boats, as well as sailing lessons, are included with your stay at the resort. I watched from the comfort of a nice Adirondack chair



The BVI's waterworld: Whether that means a quiet snorkel or a ripping turn on a windsurfer, there's something wet for every taste.

on the beach as windsurfers-in-training sailed past.

Accessible only by boat, the Bitter End Yacht Club is on the northeastern tip of Virgin Gorda where the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic meet. I stayed in one of the beachfront villas facing east. From my screened-in sanctuary, I watched the sun rise from the Atlantic every morning. Between the afternoon dives and dinner, I relaxed in the hammock on my wraparound porch, enjoyed the refreshing tradewinds and watched the sun set in the Caribbean. While swaying in the breeze, slipping in and out of sleep, the real world seemed to melt away, replaced by this tropical indulgence that seemed too good to be true.

The only bitter part of my stay was leaving. 🐟

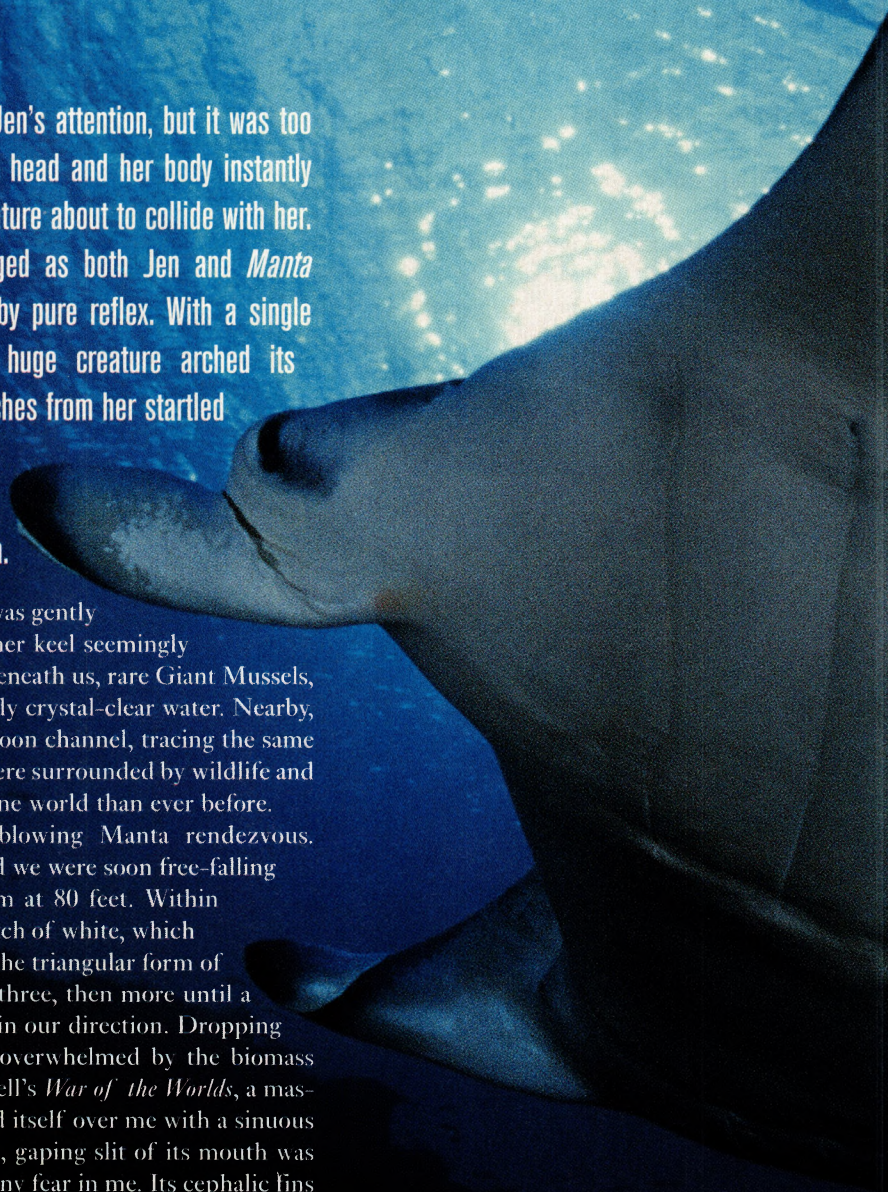
Special thanks to Sunchaser Scuba and the Bitter End Yacht Club.

Birostris of

I screamed into my mouthpiece to get Jen's attention, but it was too late. At the last second she lifted her head and her body instantly went rigid when she saw the huge creature about to collide with her. I cringed, but my fears were assuaged as both Jen and *Manta birostris* did a graceful, impromptu ballet by pure reflex. With a single downbeat of its spectacular wings, the huge creature arched its cartilaginous bulk and slid past Jen, just inches from her startled face. We were 30 feet down in Bora Bora's picture-perfect lagoon, and it was Jen's first encounter with the famous Giant Manta.

Sojourner, our boat, home and dive base, was gently rocking in the azure lagoon of Bora Bora, her keel seemingly levitated 11 feet above brilliant coral sand. Beneath us, rare Giant Mussels, more than a foot in width, filtered the already crystal-clear water. Nearby, squadrons of Mantas patrolled the inner lagoon channel, tracing the same invisible circuit they had for centuries. We were surrounded by wildlife and our own lives were more in tune to the marine world than ever before.

One typical day began with a mind-blowing Manta rendezvous. Visibility was good early in the morning, and we were soon free-falling through a gentle current to the silty bottom at 80 feet. Within minutes, Jen spotted the first one, a small patch of white, which became brighter, then metamorphosed into the triangular form of a Manta flying effortlessly toward us. Two, three, then more until a squadron of six were heading downcurrent in our direction. Dropping low for silhouette shots, I was completely overwhelmed by the biomass approaching. Like a spaceship from H.G. Well's *War of the Worlds*, a massive Manta blotted out the sun and propelled itself over me with a sinuous beat of its 15-foot wings. The down-turned, gaping slit of its mouth was ominous, but the creature's grace dispelled any fear in me. Its cephalic fins were unrolled, funneling nutrients into its gentle mouth, and the protruding black eye remained static and cold. Peering into that mysterious eye, I wondered if 20 million years of evolution had given it the gift of curiosity. It slid past a few feet away, its two rows of gills slicing the brilliant white underside. To my left, Jen was poised between the wings of another B-52, finning furiously to experience the ultimate over-the-shoulder view. They repeatedly banked around us, somersaulting, looping and arching around



Bigger and more graceful than
you have ever imagined—the
Giant Manta Ray (*Manta
birostris*).

Bora Bora

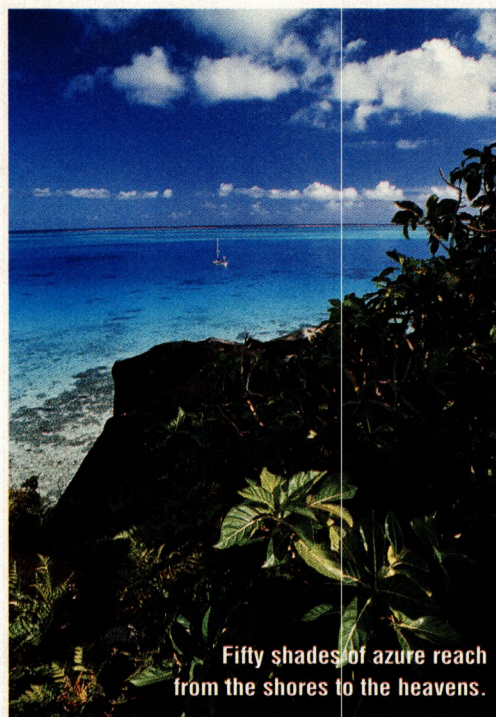


Text and Photography by Steve Alexander

our cumbersome forms. We returned to *Sojourner* with a humbleness one can only get from sharing the same space with such majestic creatures.

This was only one attraction to Bora Bora—a place often described as the most beautiful island in the world. A submerged volcanic crater, the island is dominated by Mt. Otemanu, a massive volcanic plug that provides an ever-changing and dramatic backdrop to the luminescent lagoon. Standing on a perfect motu beach, the coconut palms frame the consummate tropical scene. Dense equatorial greens cling to reddish basaltic cliffs, while above, the intense blue sky is splashed with puffy tradewind clouds. Below, the coralline sand of the shallow lagoon returns so much light that the clouds glow with a cerulean green that can be seen by boats from afar.

We pulled the anchor and headed toward Teavanui Pass on the West Side of Bora. *Sojourner's* genoa caught the trades and propelled us gently around the island. In no time we were descending the vertical rock face of the deep pass which cuts through the fringing reef, a place where pelagic critters congregate to exploit the enhanced productivity. The walls of the pass were encrusted with yellow and purple corals; huge Unicorn Fish patrolled the drop-offs. I glanced upward to see two Spotted Eagle Rays crossing the sun in perfect formation as they swam upcurrent in search



Fifty shades of azure reach from the shores to the heavens.

of new hunting grounds. Nooks and crannies were guarded with Big Eye Squirrelfish and a pair of stately French Angels meandered past, foraging for sponges. Turning back 180 degrees toward the open ocean, we drifted through the pass and ascended to a lunar landscape of coral rock carved by thousands of years of currents. Deep gullies connected to form pillars of rock 20 to 30 feet high, with overhangs plastered with a kaleidoscope of invertebrates and the ever-present Clownfish.

It was time to sample some of the outer reef action. As a guest of Michel Condesse, owner of Bora Dive Center, we headed out to Muri Muri, on the northern tip of the reef. This dive was to teach me a valuable lesson—never get complacent with sharks. The start was

awesome, sand valleys leading to spectacular coral canyons, pelagics everywhere, a massive Green Turtle, schooling 'cudas and huge trevallies cruising in the blue. But the real adrenaline was to come at the end. Ascending alone to 15 feet, I was immediately surrounded by dozens of Gray Sharks that were moving fast and not showing their usual shyness. Two particularly fat Grays immediately rushed me, passing within inches of my face. My knee-jerk reaction was to fire the shutter, blinding them with my big Ikelite strobes. This made things worse and they became

Under the Spell of Rahutu Noanoa

Escaping to Bora Bora's Pearl Beach Resort

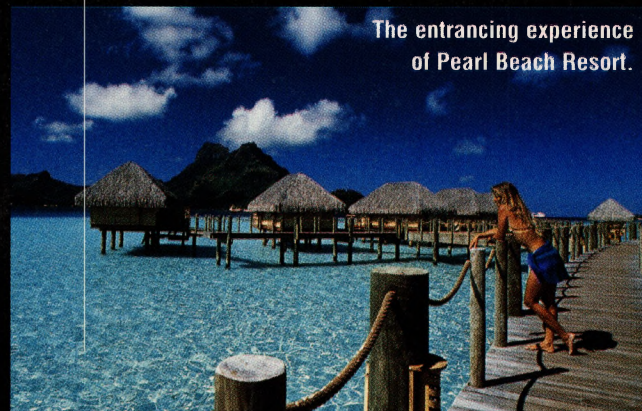
by Heather Brown

Long ago, according to the Tahitian legend of Point Tata, chiefs would scatter feathers on a cliff. The way the feathers fell would determine a person's destiny—whether or not they would be able to enter *Rahutu Noanoa*, a place of supreme perfection where the water sparkles like diamonds and are abundant with fish. My feathers led me to experience Bora Bora.

Only 10 steps off the plane in Bora Bora, and I'm leid by a gracious Polynesian vahine with a brilliant smile. Though famous for cultivating exquisite black pearls, the most precious and rare gem of the French Polynesian islands are its people with their twinkling eyes, radiant smiles and sweet nature. Their philosophy of life, *aita pea pea* (not to worry), is truly the Tahitian way.

Later, we arrive at Pearl Beach Resort, a resort that stretches out into Bora Bora's perfect blue lagoon. It offers 50 overwater bungalows. We were greeted with a Tiare, the star-shaped flower that is the national emblem of Tahiti.

Our accommodations came fully equipped with king-size bed, minibar, television and an overwater terrace offering a brilliant view of the South Pacific sunset. A step-ladder on the deck entices us into the clear blue waters below. The feature *de-crème* of the overwater bungalow is the glass bottom floor panel, allowing incurable romantics to sip a maitai in the room, while watching the playful parrotfish swim just underneath. It even pulls back so you can feed the fish that gather so close to your magical abode. My



The entrancing experience of Pearl Beach Resort.

companion and I conclude that this setting is responsible for the phenomenon of couples emerging each morning with what we called a 'bunga-glow.'

Most nights are spent feasting at the resort facilities in the company of other guests and watching the elaborate fire dancing shows. Afterward, we played guitar on the balcony before slipping into sleep with the sound of the waves lapping at the shore. That's what Bora Bora's Pearl Beach Resort is all about. An escape. A refuge. A spiritual reminder that life can be simple, centered and good.

You can always count on Blacktip Reef Sharks for company. Below left: A Polynesian fire dancer tells ancient stories with words of flame. Below right: Tales of the irresistible beauty of Tahitian women prove true.



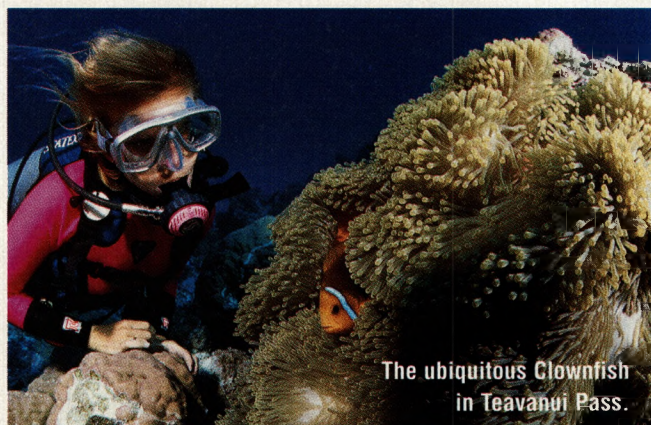
very twitchy, bolting back toward me again, only this time hitting my body. I shoved one away with the camera while kicking the other with a flipper. But I knew the bump was a precursor to a bite, and I was now extremely worried. Then it dawned on me—the strobes! The capacitors were creating a strong electrical field each time they recycled and that, together with my rapid movements, was exciting the sharks. I immediately switched off the

strobes and within seconds the pack calmed down and relaxed, resuming their normal languid circling pattern. But it took me a lot longer to relax and to forget how close I had come to being bitten by a Gray Shark.

Bora was not lacking excitement above water either. In the evenings, we'd watch in awe as the Polynesian dancers exploded in rhythm to the beat of percussion at a dance festival. Fire dancers would spin and writhe with flaming sticks, and village choirs would sing with such power, they could be

heard across the water. That last night we drifted in a dinghy, sipping Chardonnay under a full moon. Silver light rippled on the sandy bottom through water so clear, it felt as if we were flying. But our time in Bora was nearly over, six weeks of pure paradise was all we could allow. We had a special appointment with another lifelong dream—to swim with Humpback Whales, and in two months they would be calving in the warm waters of Tonga. But between Tonga and us was 1,500 miles of blue water, dozens of tropical islands and countless more incredible adventures. 🐟

Thanks to Michel and Anne Condesse at Bora Dive Center, Ocean Enterprises in San Diego, Ultralight Systems and Fuji Professional.



The ubiquitous Clownfish in Teavanui Pass.

A Private Gu

Kona Village Resort, Hawaii

The sarcasm must have been dripping off George Orwell's fingers as he penned the words, but sometimes it's absolutely true: Less is more. The first puzzle that occupies the mind of a bottom-feeding dive bum, such as myself, when assigned to spend the weekend at a resort where some of the rooms go for a nightly rate in excess of my monthly mortgage payments is: What makes this room worth five times as much as a Holiday Inn? After all, my room at the Kona Village Resort was just a grass shack. OK, it was a *very* nice little thatched-roof Polynesian-style *hale* (house), but nothing ostentatious.

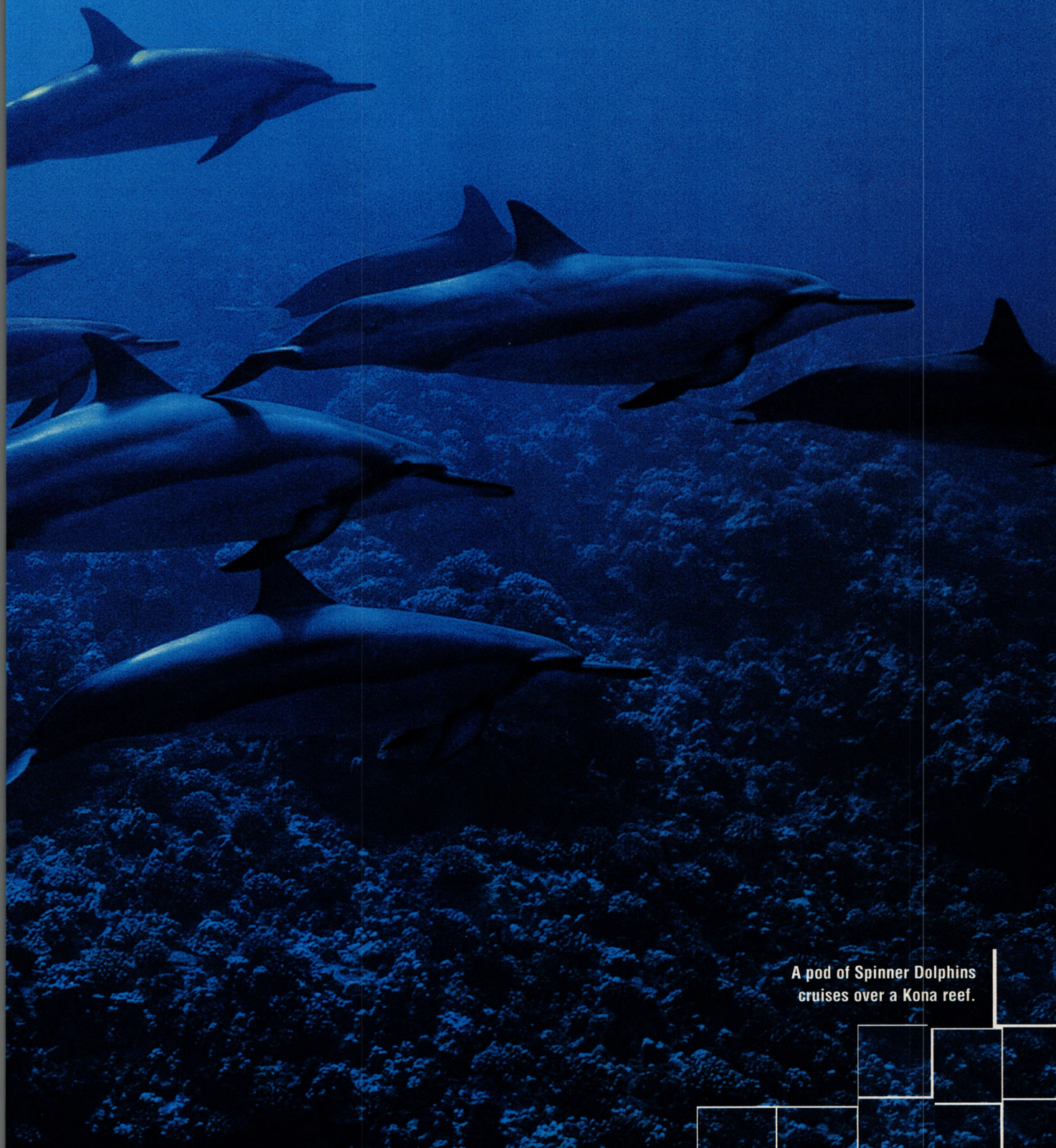
I found that part of the reason guests are willing to pay more for one of these simple dwellings than a regular hotel room is because of all the amenities that it *doesn't* have. There is no television, no telephone, no radio and no elevator. Some of the guests at the Kona Village have inherited wealth, but many are business executives and professionals with high-pressure lifestyles who desperately need to escape from such modern conveniences when they go on vacation. Yes, there are phones, fax

machines and data ports at the resort office, and messages can be delivered to your room (if you wish), but they are well hidden. Visitors are even requested to restrict cell phone use to the privacy of their own *hales*, as most of the guests do not want to even see a phone while they are escaping civilization.

When it opened in 1965, Kona Village was accessible only by small plane. Now, it is within easy reach of the new highway and international airport,

Text and Photography by Doug Perrine

est of Pelé



A pod of Spinner Dolphins
cruises over a Kona reef.

A Private Guest of Pelé

but still offers an ambience of total isolation and exclusivity. The resort not only looks like a Polynesian village, but also sounds a lot like one (minus the pigs, dogs, roosters and crying babies). At night you hear only the sound of the wind and sea. There is no traffic noise, no soundtrack from the Jackie Chan movie playing in the room next door, no drumbeat from the disco downstairs—only the simple sounds of nature.

Having stayed in real Polynesian fishing villages in the South Seas, I can vouch for the similarity of the experience, but with a critical difference. The magic word here is “service.” In the real South Seas you might not spend much to rent a grass shack, but there would be no hot bath and no cold drinks. In my *hale* at the Kona Village, there was no noisy ice-maker, but there was always ice. No one ever knocked on the door. I never saw anyone enter or leave the *hale*, but the bed was always made; there were always fresh towels; and the ice

bucket was always full. If you ask a staff member how to find something, they usually don’t just give directions. They offer to take you there. An atmosphere of casual elegance is maintained. Shorts are not welcome at dinner, but neither are coats and ties.

The sailing excursions and dive trips are operated by Hualalai Watersports, an independent concession owned by Paul Warren and Willie Ward. The diving services are tailored to fit the type of clientele that typically vacations at the Kona Village. These are not gung-ho sleep-on-the-deck gorilla divers. Instead, we are talking about highly successful people who dive occasionally as a leisure activity. Most are here for a relaxing vacation with their families and have no interest in defying death, lugging heavy items around or filling up a log book in a week. Accordingly, all gear is provided and the dive boat pulls right up to the resort beach to pick up the guests, who have only to bring themselves and their swimsuits. A typical dive day lasts from about 8:45 AM to

12:15 PM, and includes two relatively shallow dives requiring only a brief surface interval, during which complimentary refreshments and dry towels are provided. Most of the dive sites are within 10 minutes of the resort beach and group size is limited to seven divers per guide. No cattle boat diving here.

Just because the diving is easy and convenient does not mean that it is not good diving. Kona Village happens to sit smack in the middle of the most extensive area of coral reef on the Kona Coast. Most of the underwater topography, however, is shaped not by coral, but by the lava substrate. Molten lava is as plastic as taffy and able to assume a myriad of fantastic shapes. It is not constrained by the limits of coral growth. There are enough arches around here to impress a McDonald’s executive from St. Louis. Much of the diving is done within a “fish replenishment area,” protected from tropical fish collectors by recent legislation. Turtles, octopus, dolphins, Mantas and Giant Frogfish are frequently seen. Because the area is so far from where any other dive operations are based, it is exceedingly rare to see another dive boat in the area.

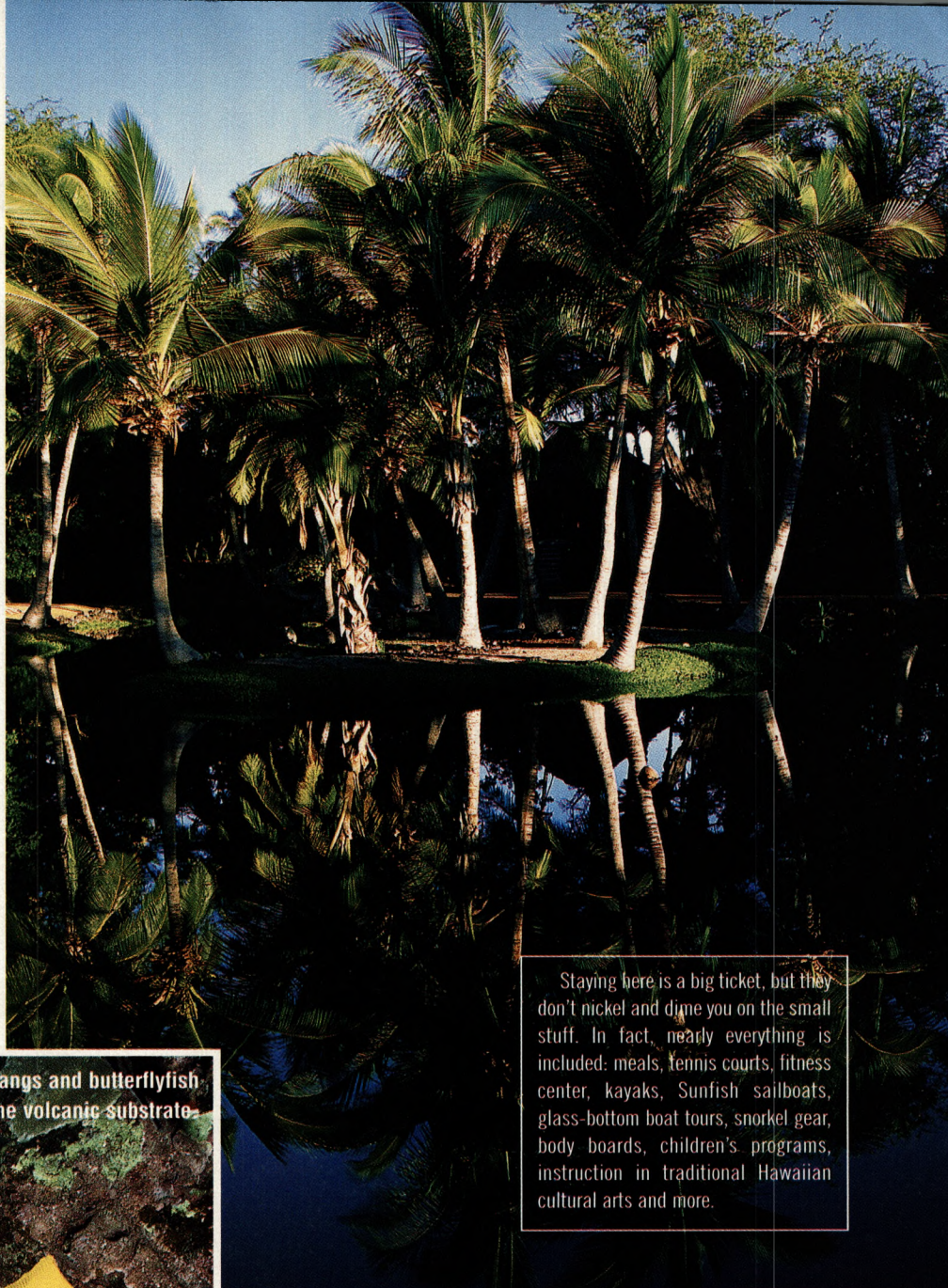
For more dedicated divers, afternoon and night dives can be scheduled if a minimum number of divers is met. By the time you read this, a fast, comfortable new catamaran dive boat should be in service that will make extended adventure dive safaris practical. On nearly half of the night dives, it is possible to observe Manta

Close your eyes, swim forward
and you’ll likely bump into a
Green Sea Turtle off Kona.



Rays doing barrel rolls to scoop up plankton rising to the surface at night. Shore diving is also available, including scooter dives with a diver propulsion vehicle. Scuba lessons are conducted in the pool, including complete PADI or NAUI certification courses, and the "Bubble Blower" program for kids 8 to 11 years old. For the truly dedicated, the owners also have a live-aboard yacht, the *Sunseeker*, available for multi-day, chartered dive safaris.

While the dives I did were excellent, I have to admit that some of my most magical marine life encounters occurred while I was out of the water. Walking along the long crescent salt-and-pepper beach in the afternoon, I observed a half-dozen Green Sea Turtles feeding on algae on beach rock in water only inches deep. As the tide went out, the turtles crawled up onto the beach to bask in the sun. Some of them felt secure enough to spend the night there. That evening, while dining on gourmet fare in the resort restaurant, I watched through the window as a Manta fed under the lights on the beach just outside. Walking out onto the beach after dinner, I joined a small group of guests observing this




Staying here is a big ticket, but they don't nickel and dime you on the small stuff. In fact, nearly everything is included: meals, tennis courts, fitness center, kayaks, Sunfish sailboats, glass-bottom boat tours, snorkel gear, body boards, children's programs, instruction in traditional Hawaiian cultural arts and more.



Yellow Tangs and butterflyfish brighten the volcanic substrate.

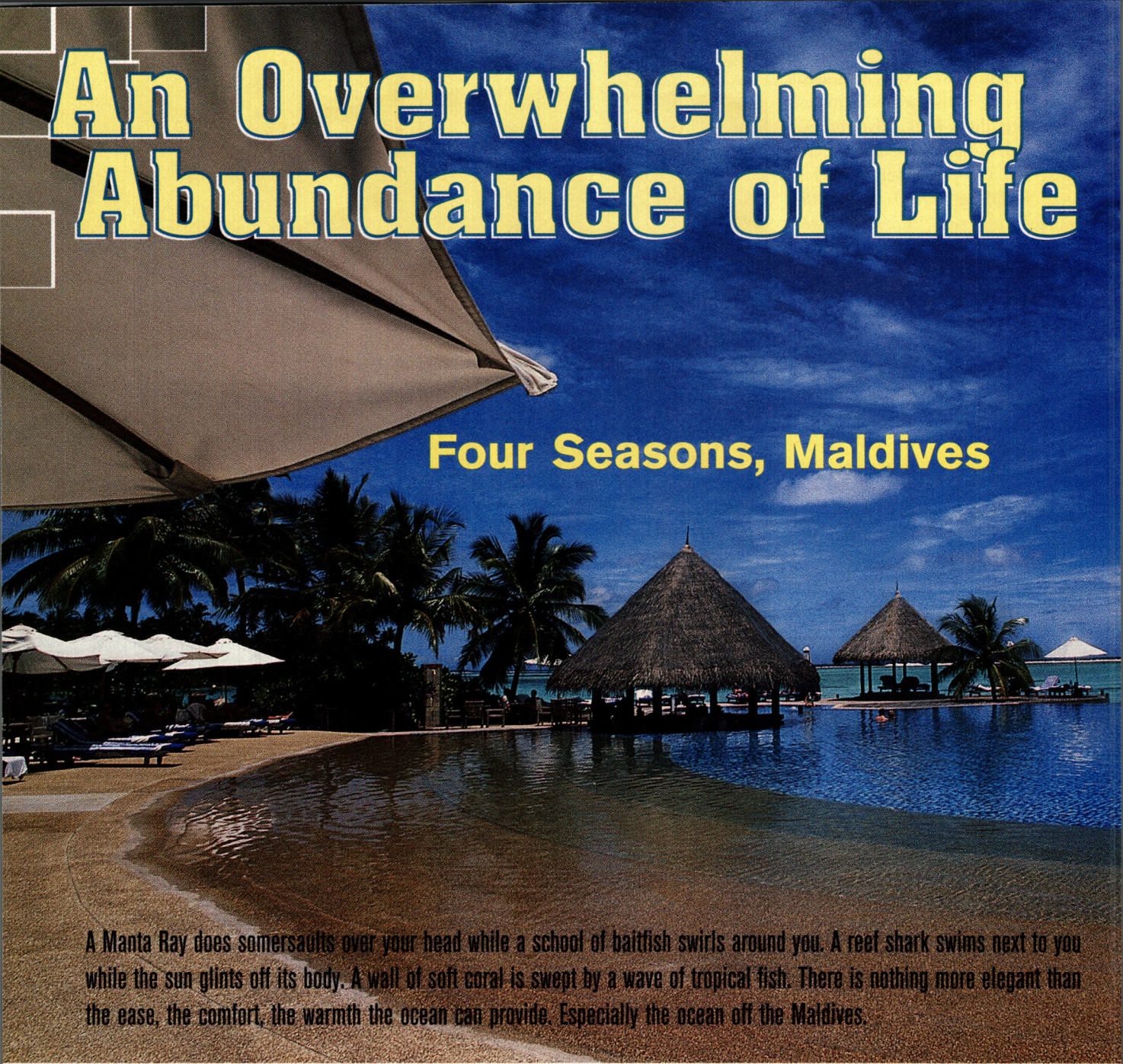
ritual that occurs nightly except during the full moon. Gulping plankton in water barely deep enough to submerge its body, every detail of the Manta's beautifully patterned form was plainly visible. In winter, Humpback Whales are often seen near the beach and can be leisurely observed from the decks of the seaside *hales* (although a better view is usu-

ally had on the catamaran cruises). Their songs can be heard loudly while diving or snorkeling.

Nature lovers and history buffs will find much more to enjoy, including the native and exotic waterfowl inhabiting the brackish ponds behind the beach, the extensive fields of ancient Hawaiian petroglyphs (rock art) and the collection of Hawaiian artifacts at the *luau* restaurant. The Friday *luau* (Hawaiian feast) is one of the best on the Kona Coast, and features a variety of Polynesian dances, including the most impressive fire dancing I've ever seen. If you would enjoy slipping back in time for a relaxing sojourn in the gentle Hawaii of yesteryear, and steeping yourself in spectacular scenery above and below water while dining and being treated like royalty, you might want to consider the Kona Village Resort. You simply have to decide to what level of royalty you aspire.  *Special thanks to Kona Village Resort and Hualalai Watersports.*

An Overwhelming Abundance of Life

Four Seasons, Maldives



A Manta Ray does somersaults over your head while a school of baitfish swirls around you. A reef shark swims next to you while the sun glints off its body. A wall of soft coral is swept by a wave of tropical fish. There is nothing more elegant than the ease, the comfort, the warmth the ocean can provide. Especially the ocean off the Maldives.

The Maldives is one of those exotic destinations of which dreams are made. A fringe of tall, swaying palm trees lays under azure skies and puffy white clouds. The rich blue of an equatorial sea wraps around beds of islands bordered by snow-white beaches. And beneath that blanket of sun-drenched water is literally one of the most marine-rich areas of the world. Easy words, but difficult to comprehend without firsthand knowledge. Tuna and other gamefish share space with Manta Rays, Whale Sharks, Napoleon Wrasse, reef sharks and an abundance of smaller fish and some truly rare invertebrates.

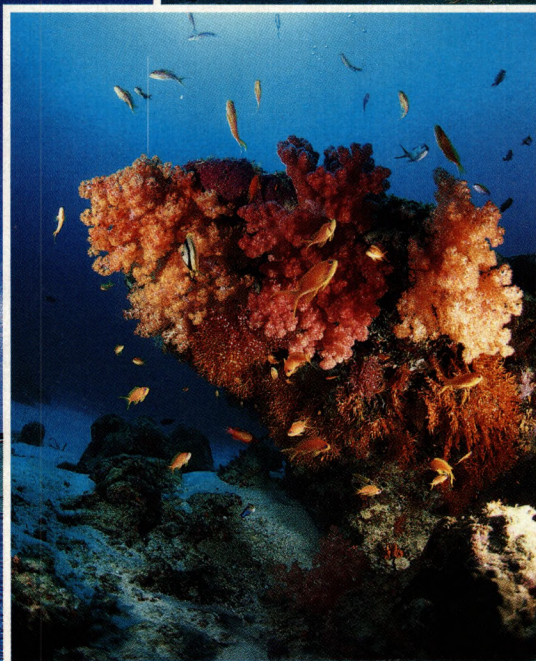
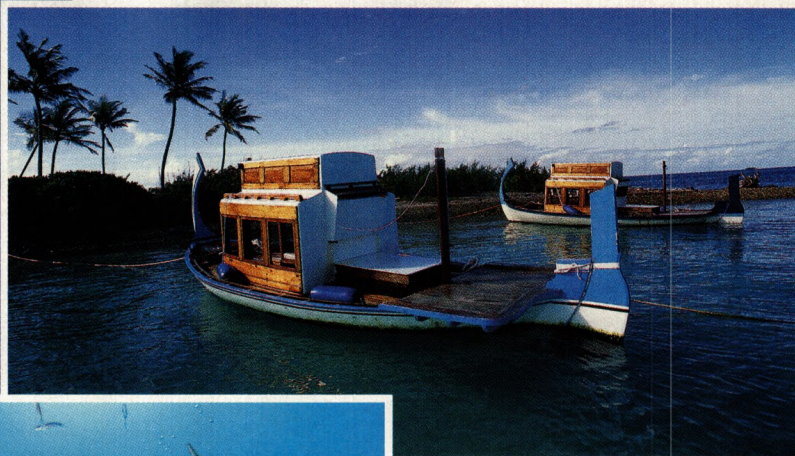
This island nation is perched on the edges of coral atolls, the rims of volcanic cones, slowly accumulating coral growth. At this moment, the highest point in the country is a mere 8 feet above sea level. Divers can visit the inner edge

of the atoll, inner reefs called *thilas*, the outside of the reef or the cuts between.

No matter where you submerge, the one thing you will see on virtually every dive is fish, fish and more fish! Turtles are plentiful. Schooling fish are almost frightening in their abundance. The variety of macro life is intimidating. Set your camera for wide-angle photos, and you will find an outrageously colored nudibranch. When set up for macro, a manta will do barrel rolls over your head. Hard coral growth may have taken a serious hit in 1998 due to the warming effects of *El Niño*, but soft coral growth was not affected and the rebound growth of hard corals has been strong.

The number of dive sites within North Malé Atoll is quite large. That said, every diver visiting Kuda Huraa will want to put Rainbow Reef at the top of their must-do list. It is a mini-

Four views of tropical perfection: unique culture; exhilarating marine life; reef vistas and unforgettable pampering.



Text and Photography by Michael Lawrence

wall stretching hundreds of yards, a wall literally dripping with brilliantly tinted soft corals. Huge sea fans adorned with crinoids sprout from the face, with schools of tropicals surrounding them. Other well-known sites include Aquarium, named and famed for the variety of fish species found there, Okobe Thila with its convoluted reef structure and huge number of schooling fish, and Nassimo Thila with its resident group of Napoleon Wrasse. But this short list barely scratches the surface of what is available off Kuda Huraa.

It is capturing this essence of abundancy both above and below the water that inspired the creation of the Four Seasons on the island of Kuda Huraa. Situated on the atoll of North Malé, just 30 minutes from the primary entry airport at Malé, the capitol of the Maldives, the Four Seasons is geared toward divers and epitomizes tropical elegance. The

decor takes its cue from the sea, with aquatic-themed sculptures that grace the property and shell-formed carvings that

dominate the interior design. This is a true ocean resort.

Accommodations take several forms. Kuda Huraa is tiny, only 12 acres total, taking just 10 to 15 minutes to walk from one end to the other. On the island itself, guests stay in charming thatch-roofed beach bungalows. The rooms are spacious and open, 15 feet to the peak of the ceiling, larger than king-size beds crowned by billowing finely-knit nets, with satellite television, refrigerators and a decor matching the cultures of the Indian Ocean.

On the far end of the island are water bungalows. Extending from the beach, perched on stilts and connected by a broad wooden walkway, these bungalows are the ultimate retreat, allowing total pampered isolation. Each cabin has all the amenities the resort can offer plus complete privacy. If you want to be seen, you can. If not, no one will know you exist.

Just offshore is the Four Seasons House Reef. It offers great opportunities for photography and fish observation. Depths are as shallow as 25 feet, allowing extended dive times. Pipefish are very common, as are other fish considered rare. For a reef so close to a populated island, the variety of fish and the health of the reef is extraordinary. 🐠

Special thanks to Four Seasons Kuda Huraa and Singapore Airlines.

BVI

GETTING THERE: There are no direct flights to the BVI from the U.S. or Canada. The easiest way to get there is to fly to San Juan, Puerto Rico, or St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., then continue to your destination via inter-island flights or ferry service from St. Thomas. American Airlines, Delta and US Airways have direct flights from several U.S. destinations to St. Thomas and St. Croix. Most flights from Europe connect via Miami or San Juan before flying on to St. Thomas. There's a U.S. \$10 air tax when leaving the British Virgin Islands.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round. The rainy season is September through December; the driest is January through March. Water conditions are calmest April through August. Peak tourist season is December through April. Hurricane season is September and October.

Topside Climate: Winter 73 to 82°F, summer 79 to 88°F. **Water Temperature:** On average, winter 72°F, summer 86°F. **Exchange Rate:** The U.S. dollar is the official currency of the BVI. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time plus 1 hour. No daylight-saving time.

CONTACTS: (Virgin Gorda) Dive BVI (800) 848-7078 www.divebvi.com • Kilbride's Sunchaser Scuba (800) 932-4286 www.come.to/bvi • The Bitter End Yacht Club (800) 872-2392 www.beyc.com

RESOURCES: BVI Tourist Board (800) 835-8530 www.bviwelcome.com • Lonely Planet Guide to the BVI www.lonelyplanet.com • Moon Handbooks, www.moon.com • Skin Diver Online, www.skin-diver.com

FIJI

GETTING THERE: Air New Zealand (among others) flies direct from Los Angeles (12 hours) several times a week.

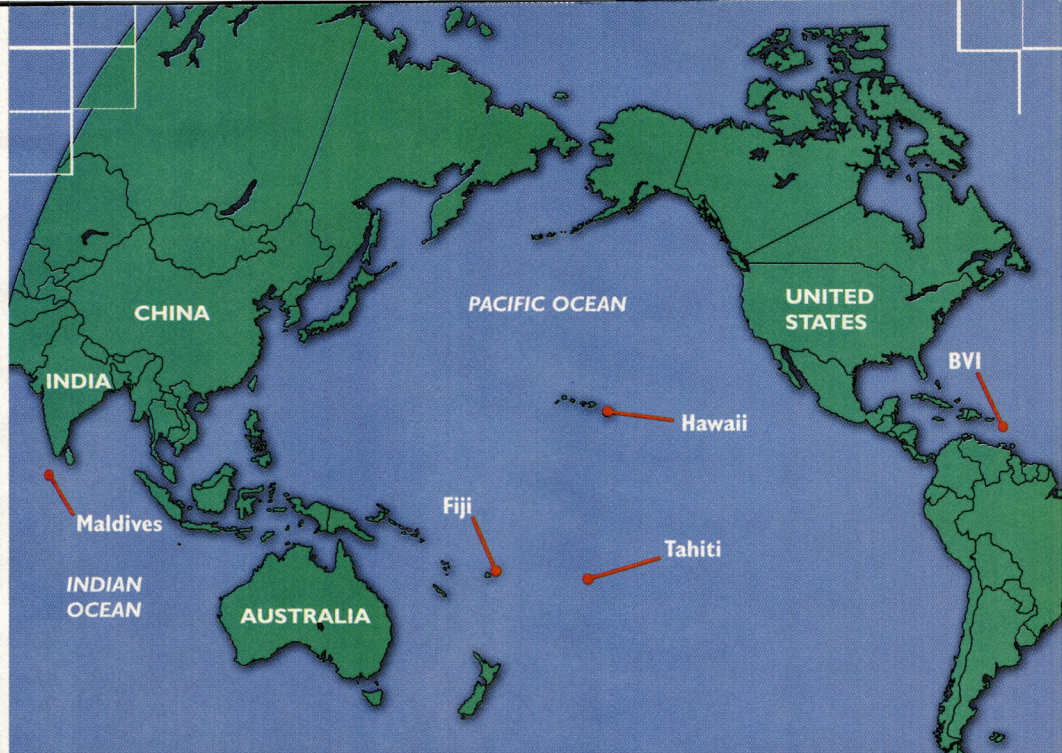
FACTS & TIPS: Best Time to Visit: Tomorrow. Any time it is snowing, sleeting, hailing, too cold, too hot, too windy, or raining. When houseguests threaten to visit. When the neighbor's dog barks too loud. Today. **Topside Climate:** Tropical, but it does rain often and can be breezy and cool, so rain gear and a light jacket are a good idea. The rainiest season is from December through February. May through October is the driest time of year. Tradewinds bring year-round afternoon and evening sea breezes. **Water Temperature:** Typically 76 to 83°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 2.31 (FJD) Fiji Dollars. The U.S. dollar is accepted at many major resorts, but it is best to have some local currency when traveling. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time plus 17 hours.

CONTACTS: Air New Zealand (800) 262-1234 www.airnewzealand.com/gateway.jsp or www.dive.inthepacific.com • Air Fiji (877) 247-3454 www.airfiji.net • Air Pacific (800) 227-4446 www.airpacific.com or www.warmdivescoulds.com • Qantas Airways (800) 227-4500 www.qantas.com • Sun Air (800) 294-4864 www.fiji.to • Nukubati Island Resort (888) 345-4669 www.nukubati.com • Wakaya Club (800) 828-3454 www.wakaya.com • World of Diving (800) 900-7657 www.worldofdiving.com

RESOURCES: Fiji Visitors Bureau (800) 932-FIJI www.bula.fijiislands.com • Fiji Dive Operators Association (FDOA) www.fijidive.com • Skin Diver Online, www.skin-diver.com

HAWAII

GETTING THERE: Hawaii, the Big Island: Fly in from anywhere (swimming from L.A. is not advised). Most major airlines ser-



Skin Diver GUIDE BVI·FIJI·HAWAII·MALDIVES·TAHITI

vice the island, such as American Airlines, Continental Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines and United Airlines.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Excellent year-round, but September to April is best diving because there's less chance of rain. **Topside Climate:** Tropical. Comfortably balmy and warm year-round with northeasterly tradewinds. Near coast, temperatures range from 68 to 83°F. **Water Temperature:** 74 to 82°F (average of 78°F). **Exchange Rate:** USD is easily, too easily accepted. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 6 hours (5 during daylight-saving).

CONTACTS: Hualalai Watersports (808) 325-8221 www.dive.sail.com • Kona Village Resort (800) 367-5290 www.konavillage.com

RESOURCES: Hawaii Visitors' and Convention Bureau (800) GO-HAWAII www.gohawaii.com • AquaQuest www.aquaquest.com • Lonely Planet Guide to Hawaii www.lonelyplanet.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com

MALDIVES

GETTING THERE: Access to this destination via Singapore Airlines or Malaysia Airlines. You will need to set a night aside for a layover. The best way to do this is to stay at Four Seasons Singapore. Take time to indulge yourself in their fine spa facilities. If you really want to take full advantage of this trip, put aside at least a couple of days to explore Singapore. A very cosmopolitan Asian city, Singapore offers shopping and truly great deals, particularly in fabrics and clothing.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round—December to March is the northeast monsoon season (the *iruvai*) and May to November is the wet season (the *hulhangu*). Big animals (Whale Sharks and Mantas) tend to come during the wet season due to the wealth of planktonic life. **Topside Climate:** Temperatures are very stable, varying only 5 to 10°F. Average temperature is 78 to 88°F. **Water Temperature:** 78 to 88°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 1.83 SGD. American-based credit cards are readily accepted. Checks are not.

Time Difference: Eastern Standard Time plus 23 hours.

CONTACTS: Four Seasons on Kuda Huraa (800) 332-3442 www.fourseasons.com • Malaysia Airlines (800) 552-9264 www.malaysiaairlines.com • Singapore Airlines www.singaporeair.com **RESOURCES:** Maldives Tourism www.maldives.com or www.visitmaldives.com • Lonely Planet Guide to the Maldives www.lonelyplanet.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com

TAHITI

GETTING THERE: Tahiti is only 7.5 hours by air from Los Angeles. Many airlines service Tahiti, including the national airline Air Tahiti Nui, as well as Air New Zealand.

FACTS & TIPS: Tahiti is very French, which means good food, wine and a relaxed attitude on most beaches. On some of the outer islands, French is spoken almost exclusively. Bora Bora has a heady mix of cosmopolitan atmosphere and south seas romance. It, along with the rest of Tahiti, has some of the most awe-inspiring scenery in the world. **Best Time To Visit:** Year-round. Summer is November to April; it's cooler during the rest of the year. **Topside Climate:** Hot, tropical, mid-80°F. **Water Temperature:** 82°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 125 CFP (French Pacific Franc). USD accepted. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 5 hours.

CONTACTS: Bora Diving Center (011) 689-67-71-84 www.boradive.com • Top Dive Bora Bora (011) 689-60-50-50 www.topdive.com • Aqua Safari (011) 689-67-74-83 boradiving@mail.pf • Nemo World (011) 689-67-63-33 www.nemodivebora.com • Blue Nui Dive Centers (011) 689-67-79-07 borablauenui@mail.pf • Hotel Bora Bora Pearl Beach Resort (011) 689-60-52-02 www.pearlresort.com • Air Tahiti Nui (877) 824-4846 www.airtahitiniui-usa.com

RESOURCES: Tahiti Tourisme North America www.gototahiti.com • Tahiti Dive Association www.diving-tahiti.com • Lonely Planet Guide to Tahiti & Polynesia www.lonelyplanet.com • Moon Guidebook to Tahiti www.moon.com • Skin Diver Online www.skin-diver.com

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PLAYERS: *Skin Diver* and the instructor team will select 18 qualified candidates from a random lottery.

Qualified divers must have 75 logged dives, advanced open water certification and basic Nitrox or higher level certifications.

THE OPERATION: Phase One (March 22 to 25, 2002): Following an orientation on March 21, 2002, will be four days of intensive training in Advanced Nitrox with Decompression Procedures and Extended Range diving at Forty Fathom Grotto in Ocala, FL. Successful candidates will receive certification at the Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures levels.



Phase Two (April 5 to 8, 2002): Twelve divers selected from Phase One will move forward to Phase Two, completing Extended Range and Advanced TRIMIX. This training will be completed on the deep wrecks of South Florida in water depths between 150

and 300 feet.

Phase Three (TBD): Actual expedition dives completed by the six remaining divers.

SELECTION PROCESS: At each phase of the operation, six divers will be eliminated, survivor-style.

Instructional staff will evaluate divers on the ability to complete training, plan the dives and on the quality of their water skills. Diving participants will vote to remove members of the team based on their evaluation of the team member's contribution, his or her ability to work as part of each team and ability to complete the dives in question.

PHOTOGRAPHY: World-class photo-journalist and technical diver Bret Gilliam will be the official underwater photographer. Some survivors of the selection process may be assigned additional photographic duties.

TEAM LEADERS: Mike Ange, Group Leader: Advanced TRIMIX and Advanced Wreck instructor trainer, certified advanced diver medic, author of diving text and numerous articles, and veteran of expeditions to the USS *Monitor National* historic site.

Joe Odom, Diving Safety Officer and Selection Process Supervisor: Advanced TRIMIX and Advanced Wreck instructor trainer, author of numerous diving textbooks and articles, and a veteran of several photographic expeditions focusing on large marine mammals and sharks.

Mike Bourne, Diving Safety Officer and Dive Site Supervisor: Advanced TRIMIX and Advanced Wreck instructor trainer and senior instructor trainer for Emergency Response Diving.

COST: Selected participants will incur a cost of \$2,500 for training, charter fees and certification fees. Travel expenses and lodging at all sites are the responsibility of the participant. Meals and other incidental expenses are the responsibility of the participant. Participants eliminated after Phase One training will be reimbursed \$700 for training and the balance of any unused admission/charter fees. 🐠

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Best of Show **Marc Hannigan** Walnut Creek, CA

The 2001 *Underwater Malaysia* International Imaging Festival

Above me,
the sun

BY ANDREA WINDSOR

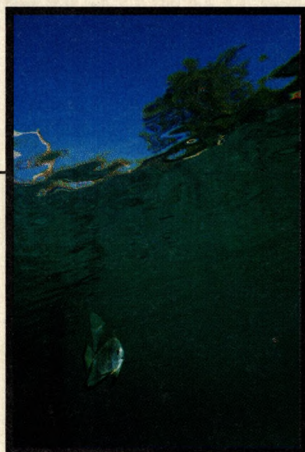
the first week of
September.

sliced through the clear, warm water, showering me with cascading golden rays, while below the world dropped breathtakingly away. Gliding along the wall of Sipadan's famed 2,000-foot drop-off, suddenly my journey to reach this remote speck of an island was worth every minute and every mile.

My adventure had begun as I boarded the Malaysia Airlines flight in Los Angeles with the other participants, primed and ready to reach the 3rd Underwater Malaysia International Imaging Festival, held in Borneo

Thirty hours, four airports, one bus and a tiny boat later, as a magnificent harvest moon rose above the surrounding South China Sea, our group arrived, tired but excited, at our respective resorts, Borneo Divers at Sipadan and Sipadan Water Village at nearby Mabul.

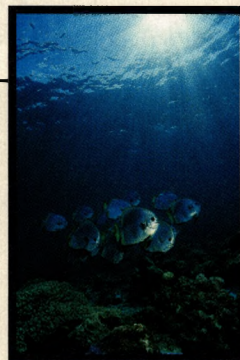
We were welcomed by photo pros Doug Perrine, Dr. Murray Kaufman, Steve Fish of Borneo Divers, Al Hornsby of *Skin Diver*, Berkely White of Backscatter and Yoshi Hirata of Sipidan Water Village. There were also representatives from the resorts;



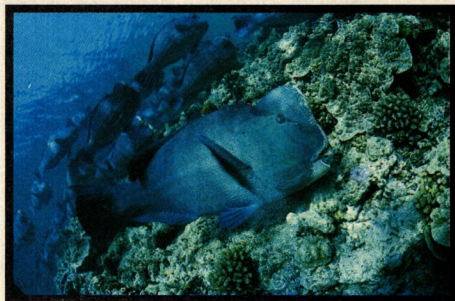
1st Place Open **Brad Brown** Los Altos, CA



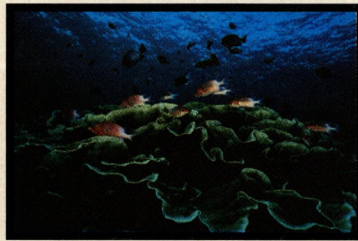
2nd Place Open
Andrea Windsor Aventura, FL



3rd Place Open
Mark Brouwer
Castellwgs, Germany



1st Place Novice **Larisa Manewal**
Santa Barbara, CA



2nd Place Novice
Marcia Holland Dana Point, CA



3rd Place Novice
Marcia Holland Dana Point, CA

Wide-Angle

1st Place Fin **Sheryl Brakey** Far Oaks Ranch, TX

Ken Bailey Gualala, CA

2nd Place **Keith Strange** Napa, CA

3rd Place **Marsha O'Shaughnessy** Dover, NH

Video



1st Place Open **Josh Carlson** Chicago, MN



2nd Place Open
Kaori Wada Kabagawa, Japan



3rd Place Open
Brad Brown Los Altos, CA



1st Place Novice **Michael McCormack** Hampton, NH

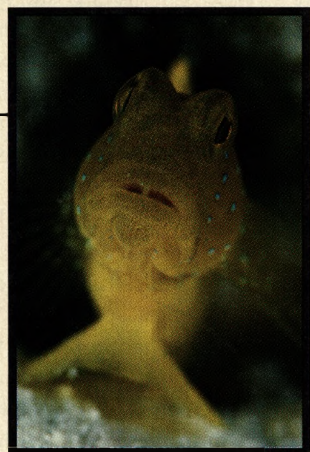


2nd Place Novice
Larisa Manewal Santa Barbara, CA

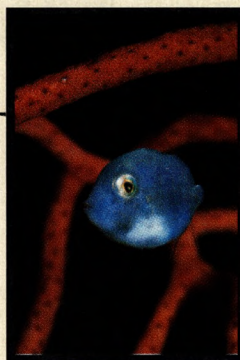


3rd Place Novice
Michael Coker Austin, TX

Creative



1st Place Open
Josh Carlson
Chicago, MN



2nd Place Open **Josh Carlson** Chicago, MN



3rd Place Open
Vickie Coker Austin, TX



1st Place Novice
Michael Coker Austin, TX



2nd Place Novice
Michael McCormick Hampton, NH



3rd Place Novice
Michael Coker Austin, TX

Macro

Underwater Malaysia

International Diving Expeditions, the founder of the event; Sea & Sea Underwater Photography, which provided a mountain of photo and video gear for us to try; and Scuba Zoo, which along with Borneo Divers provided day and night film processing.

Our week slipped by all too quickly. Each morning we would head out to dive, using our own equipment or new pieces set up and explained by Sea & Sea. The photo pros dived with us, giving impromptu coaching sessions and

individual advice. We explored and attempted to capture on film the incredible wealth and beauty found in these waters.

Even the seasoned divers among us were amazed and thrilled by the richness of color and diversity of marine life we encountered on every dive. Reef sharks cruised the walls and patrolled the shallow reef tops, mingling with Sipadan's most famous residents, the Hawksbill and Green Sea Turtles, which were seen in startlingly

large numbers. Large schools of barracudas, Horse-eye Jacks, Bat Fish and the impressive Bumphead Parrotfish made for excellent photo opportunities, as did the phenomenal macro life, especially around Mabul and nearby Kapalai. Those who could tear their eyes (and lenses) away from the pelagic activity were rewarded by Blue Ribbon Eels, Leaf Fish, endlessly entertaining clown fish, Ornate Ghostpipefish and a multitude of brightly colored nudibranchs.

Every night after dinner, the photo pros put on seminars and reviewed our slides. Everyone's learning curve ramped way up, and all of us captured images like we never had before.

The event's grand finale featured a scrumptious reception sponsored by the HammerHeads dive club and a lavish awards ceremony and banquet provided by Sabah Tourism, held at the luxurious Shangri La Tanjung Aru Resort in Kota Kinabalu. At the banquet we were welcomed by government officials, entertained by local music and dance, treated to a wonderful dinner and shown the collection of photography shot during the week by our entire group. When the prizes for top photos and videos were given out, we were all in awe of the quality of work done, even by the first-time shooters.

In one short week we had had the opportunity to shoot with various new housings, lenses and strobes; 30 dives on some of the most spectacular sites we had ever seen; had coaching from world-class pros; made many wonderful new friends; and seen the quality of our images improve tremendously, all in a beautiful, exotic land like most of us had never experienced.

Special thanks to: Malaysia Tourism, Sabah Tourism, Malaysia Airlines, Borneo Divers, Sipadan Water Village, International Dive Expeditions, Sea and Sea Underwater Photographic, Hammer Heads, Skin Diver, Scuba Zoo, Shangri-La Tanjung Aru Resort, Harveys, Light and Motion, Oceanic, PADI, Pelican, SeaVision and TUSA.

For information on the 2002 Underwater Malaysia International Imaging Festival, contact International Diving Expeditions, at www.underwatermalaysia.com.

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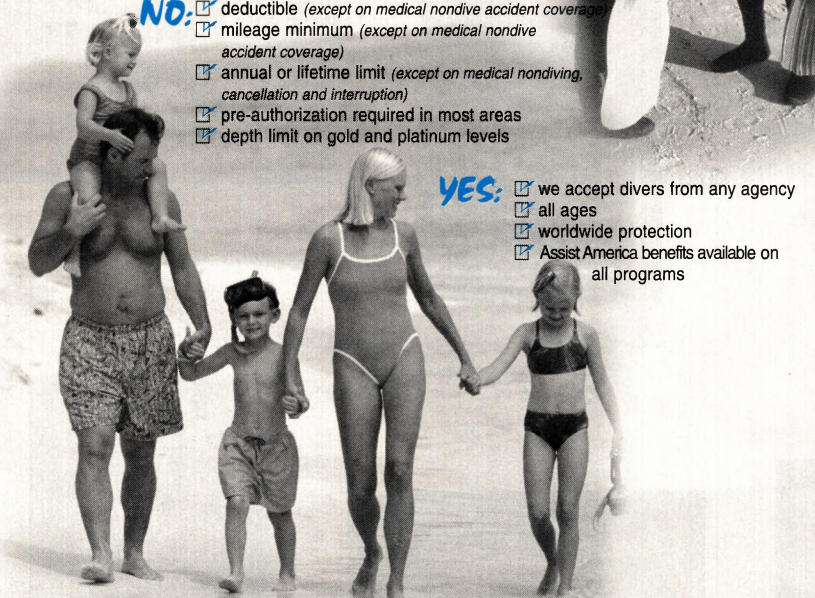
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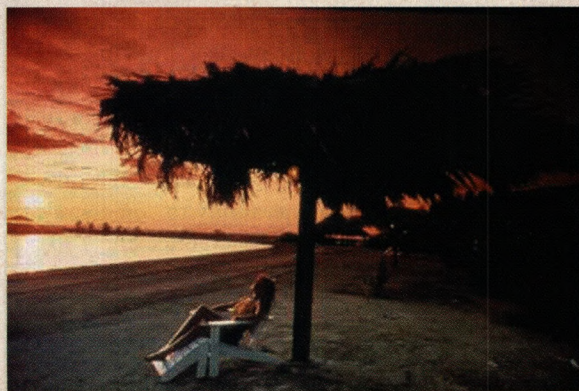
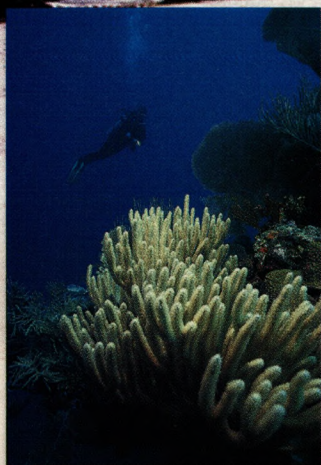


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BUBBLEFREE IN BELIZE

by Emile Bernard

Training with rebreathers to go nose-to-nose with the residents of mother ocean.

Six years ago, I stood on the swim platform of the *Cayman Aggressor III* live-aboard, staring into the crystal-clear waters above Bloody Bay Wall. I was about to do something very unnatural—breathe underwater. It was the beginning of my open water certification course, and since then I have been rewarded with hundreds of great marine life encounters.

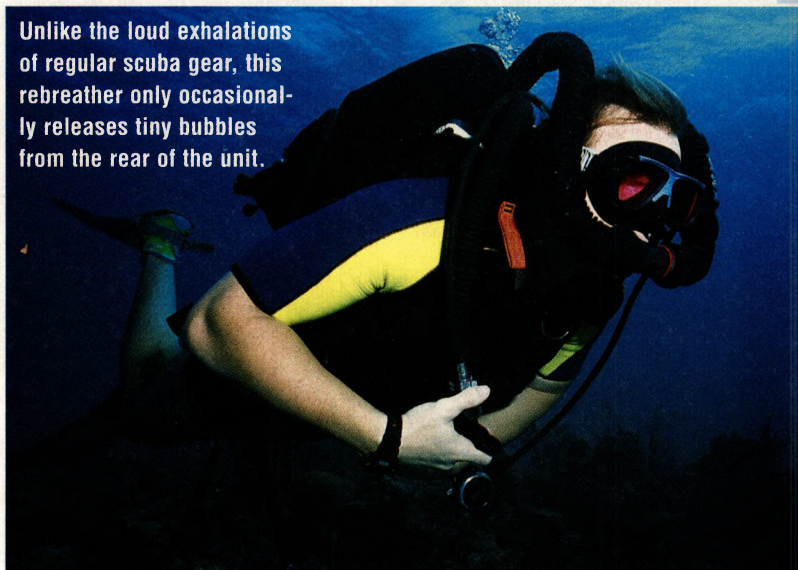
Déjà vu. Today, I am standing on the swim platform of the *Belize Aggressor III* with a warm breeze in my face and butterflies in my stomach. I am again going to do something unnatural—rebreathe my own air underwater! I have been told rebreathers are the ticket to the most intimate encounters with the ocean's most shy creatures. By the week's end, I should know whether or not that's true.

My air source for this dive is my own breath, with the addition of a little nitrox (50 percent EAN to be exact) to keep the oxygen level at the proper level. My breath will pass through a canister of sodalime to get rid of carbon dioxide, then mix thoroughly in an "inhalation bag" with the nitrox. It comes back to me as a perfect breathing mix for my planned dive. The inhalation bag and its counter, the exhalation bag, are now my exterior lungs.

Exterior lungs, now there's a thought. I can even feel the bags fill and deflate with each breath. With these two extra air bags, buoyancy is an issue, so I have twice as much lead in my pockets as normal. However, I also have the strange sensation of not being able to adjust my buoyancy by inhaling or exhaling. Because the air is recycled, and not expelled, I don't sink when I exhale or rise when I inhale. Once my buoyancy is set with the BC, it's set.

We are moored at Long Caye Wall, just one of many spectacular dive sites on Lighthouse Reef, a huge reef about 60 miles off the Belize coast. After plunging into the ocean, I swim through a heard of chubs, Yellowtail Snapper and Horse-eye Jacks that congregate in the boat's shadow. With only a few breaths, the differences between diving with a rebreather and with traditional scuba are already becoming apparent. For starters, the air that I breathe is wetter and warmer than I've ever experienced before. A barrage of bubbles is not erupting from my mouthpiece like it does with

Unlike the loud exhalations of regular scuba gear, this rebreather only occasionally releases tiny bubbles from the rear of the unit.



open-circuit scuba. There is only a small stream of tiny exhalation bubbles trickling from the back of my Draeger Ray rebreather.

Fellow rebreather student Jerry and I swim to the top of the wall at about 30 feet to test the mettle of these units. Are they truly silent? Will I increase my bottom time? And most importantly, will I be able to get close to the most skittish of fish, unlike when diving on noisy open-circuit scuba?

Jerry, who is using a Draeger Dolphin rebreather (the Ray's big brother), darts off toward the reef searching for a subject to test our "stealth rebreather diver" theory. He is a country boy from Tennessee with the build of a linebacker, which coincidentally was his position in college football, so his physical presence cannot be ignored. We zig and zag through coral partitions coated with cascading Orange Elephant Ear Sponges and protruding golden tube sponges. A Queen Angelfish is gently pecking away at the reef. Jerry spies the subject of his test and is in pursuit. Can this hulk-sized diver really get cozy with one of the most cagey critters in the sea? Jerry edges closer and closer until he is mere inches from the elegant blue and gold fish. I can't believe my eyes. I've spent many an exasperated dive chasing Queen Angels with my camera only to come away with tail-end shots, yet this fish doesn't notice the 230-pound figure hovering only a few inches away from his gills. The angelfish continues to nibble at the coral, as purple and gold Fairy Basslets and Bluehead Wrasses buzz

about Jerry's mask. The angelfish nonchalantly proceeds down the reef, practically oblivious to Jerry's presence. He turns and gives me an emphatic thumbs up and a giant grin around his double-hose mouthpiece.

"I'll never dive the same again!" Jerry screams as we take a warm freshwater shower on the *Aggressor's* dive platform. "Man. I gotta get me one of these," he says in a resounding southern drawl. I glance down at the pressure gauge dangling from my 50-cubic-foot tank, and I'm astonished. I have only used 800 psi for a 40-minute dive. Jerry's right, I

gotta get me one of these.

The dive at Long Caye Wall is our first of four dives required to complete the rebreather certification. Between swims at Painted Wall and Tarpon Cave, our instructor, Steve, teaches us proper maintenance, cleaning and the essential physics needed for rebreather certification. However, it's not always easy to focus on the academics when there are so many other distractions, like a palm-fringed snowy white beach just a short ocean kayak paddle away. How can my instructor expect me to concentrate on PO_2 levels when I

The stealth qualities of a rebreather make getting up-close and personal with marine life almost too easy.





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You can also get rebreather training at many dive shops and resorts worldwide. Call your local shop and they'll point you in the right direction.

The Silent Treatment



could be freediving on the reef, which sometimes breaks through the surface as the water color passes from bright turquoise to deep midnight blue?

"Dive briefing," John Garraway calls out. All of the anxious divers scramble

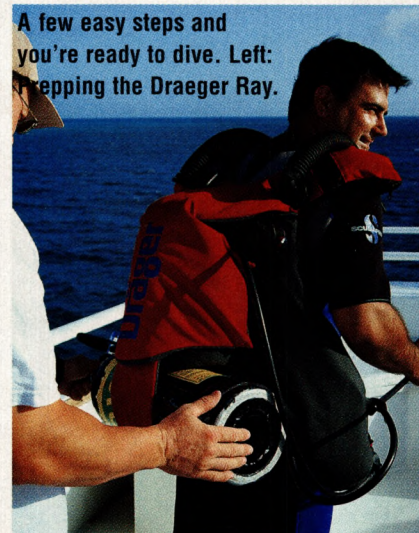


around the camera table to check out the details of the next site. "This is Dos Coco, there's everything on this wall, mon. Eels, nudibranchs, tiny Arrow Crabs, Tarpon, Eagle Rays. You can't find it, mon, get me and I'll show it to you." John, a slim native Belizean, knows Dos Coco and every other site on Lighthouse and Turneffe reefs like the back of his hand. He has been an engineer and divemaster on the *Belize Aggressor III* for 11 years.

Jerry and I strap on our rebreathers and head for the swim platform. By now I'm pretty comfortable with the ray. It's time to see if I can have a few intimate encounters of my own. The reef is buzzing with activity as it has been on all afternoon dives. Tarpon are coming up from the deep, parrotfish are zipping about and groupers are lying in the sand. I zero-in on a chunky Nassau Grouper with a gaggle of wrasses cleaning its gills and teeth. This guy is my "stealth rebreather diver" guinea pig. As I creep toward the sedentary grouper, a

beautiful Scrawled Cowfish catches my eye. I close in on him. The golden fish goes about its business exploring a stand of pillar coral as I approach. I edge closer and closer until I am nose-to-nose with this gorgeous fish. The tiny blue-green horns above its large eyes are less than a foot away from my mask. I expect that at any moment it will flinch and swim away. But instead it rises a few feet off the sandy bottom to check out a lilac sea plume. I mirror the movement and ascend with it. There are only a few inches between us.

A few easy steps and
you're ready to dive. Left:
Prepping the Draeger Ray.



Incredible. In just a few days, I feel as though I have been transformed from an inconsiderate, bubble-blowing freak to something more welcome, more in tune with the underwater world. It brings me to only one conclusion. I gotta get me one of these. 🐡

Special thanks to the crew of the *Belize Aggressor III* and *Discover Expeditions Tours*.

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Dräger archival photograph, circa 1911

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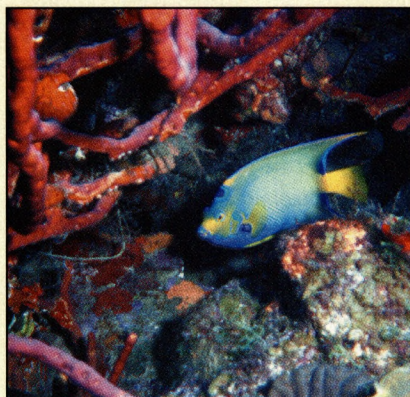

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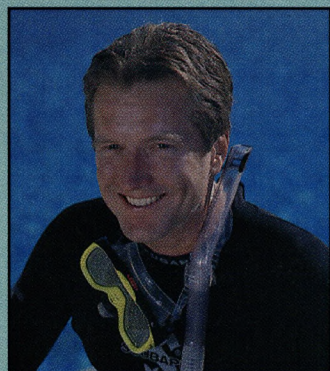
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A look at those who helped define diving and continue to push it forward.

Teaching Through PADI: Drew Richardson

As Senior Vice President, Training, Education, Environment and Memberships for PADI, Drew Richardson certainly has been involved in the growth and modernization of scuba diving standards, training and educational programs. Since coming to PADI in 1985, Drew has overseen a variety of initiatives and programs that have provided positive change for the recreational scuba diving industry. These include the 1988 S.A.F.E. diver campaign, the introduction of the Project AWARE environmental awareness program in the early 1990s, and the PADI video and CD-Rom training programs.

An active instructor and educator who has directly trained more than 3,000 divers from entry level through instructor trainer levels, Drew's positive influence on the dive industry can



be seen through his involvement overseeing the direction of all program and course development. Drew's responsibilities at PADI include the Diving Sciences and Technology (DSAT) group, Project AWARE,

Industry Relations, Training and Quality Management, Publishing and Education and the PADI International Resort and Retailer Association. Under Drew's supervision, PADI's educational system is used in 175 countries and has been translated into 20 different languages. He oversees programs for 100,000 PADI professionals and 4,000 stores and resorts that use PADI programs and services. Drew is also editor in chief of PADI's *Undersea Journal*, one of the oldest diving publications in the industry.

An active supporter and member of both the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) and Divers Alert Network (DAN), Drew has been recognized by both organizations. In 1992, he received the DAN/Rolux Diver of the Year award for his contributions to diver safety. He was also the recipient of the 2000 UHMS Craig Hoffman Memorial Award for his long-standing contributions to both diving and the medical community. 🐟



Principal of Diving: Doug McNeese

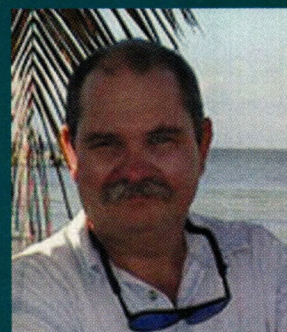
A driving force behind the 1998 merger of Scuba Schools International and NASDS (National Association of Scuba Diving Schools), Doug McNeese has been involved in diver education and dive retailing for more than 20 years. It all started

in 1975 when he became involved with The Dive Shop in Memphis, TN, and continued as Doug saw the growth and potential of scuba diving as a business and recreational activity. From there, he built additional stores throughout the South, eventually being named Executive Director of NASDS in 1993. Doug was instrumental in the development of numerous sales training and educational programs both for the retail community and dive consumers. Under his leadership, NASDS doubled its membership and revised and enhanced its entire product line. Today, as Executive Director of SSI, Doug has overseen a retailer program that has seen strong results including additional SSI-affiliated stores being opened across the country and internationally. 🐟

He Wrote the Book: Alex Brylske, Ph.D.

Some have referred to him as "the man who wrote the book on diving." After authoring more than 200 articles, numerous well-known textbooks and assisting in developing popular international scuba curriculums, few could argue Alex's impact on the growth and popularity. It's been substantial.

For almost a decade, he served on the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) committee on recreational scuba diving standards. This body helps to develop consensus on training and safety standards for diving. He has worked closely with PADI and currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Coral Reef Alliance and Oceanwatch. A well-known source for information and the history of diving, Alex also serves as senior editor for *Dive Training* and is the Marine Conservation and Education specialist for the Project AWARE Foundation. An adjunct professor at Edison Community College in Florida, Alex was recently the recipient of NOAA's 2001 Walter B. Jones Excellence Award for Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. 🐟





Short Bigeye

BY NED AND ANNA DELOACH WITH PAUL HUMANN

WANDERING FROM EXHIBIT TO EXHIBIT IN BOSTON'S New England Aquarium my wife Anna and I recognized the faces of old friends from the reefs of the Bahamas, Fiji and beyond. Others, prompted us to make mental note of their home ranges, in hopes that we might one day sight them in the wild.

Suddenly, with a tug on the sleeve, Anna guided me before a dimly lit tank housing four beautiful red fish about the size of my palm. "Short Bigeyes," she whispered,

"aren't they majestic?" These are the young adults of the little orange juvenile we found hiding in a conch shell off Ft. Lauderdale. "Look," she pointed toward the information card, "it says the adults reach a foot in length and live below 400 feet. I guess we had better enjoy them here while we can."

Fortunately for divers and snorkelers, most fish live well within safe diving limits; however, a few spectacular

species, particularly members of the snapper and sea bass families, inhabit deep underwater cliffs where the human eye seldom ventures. Like the Short Bigeye, the pelagic larvae of many of these deep-dwelling fish first settle on shallow sea shelves while they mature through

their juvenile stage before descending to great depths where they spend the remainder of their lives.

Even though it requires a lengthy boat ride and the bottom is a bit deep for easy recreational diving, the northeastern coast of Florida can rival the Caribbean during the early summer when conditions are right. What these temperate waters lack in marine biodiversity, they make up for in sheer biomass and unexpected fish sightings.

On an overcast morning in early June, just four months after our visit to Boston, I was speeding east from the north Florida fishing village of Mayport. An hour later, I dropped down the anchor line through unseasonably murky water toward a 4-foot ledge that lay 110 feet below. Only a faint glow of sunlight remained at the bottom to guide me east along a shadowy rock facing. I was just beginning to think about backtracking toward the security of the anchor when my light beam struck a brilliant spark of eyeshine out over the sand. I took my bearings and cautiously approached the reflection. From 5 feet away my hand light illuminated a Short Bigeye the size of a dinner plate. The fish didn't flinch as I moved to within 2 feet of where it hovered above a small break in the bottom. Wow, the sea never ceases to amaze! 🐟

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October 2001 - Dive Atlas of the WORLD • BONUS Southern Diver Inside • 6 Little Dive Lights with a Big Punch • The Glamorous Life... Become an Instructor - Dive and Get Paid • Western Shores of the Americas - Cocos, Socorro and Galapagos • Bathed In Civilization - diving the BVI's • Hawaii 7-0 • Far & Away In Fiji.

September 2001 - New Shark Dive - Cayman Gets Teeth! 8 Must-Have Dive Computers; The Future of Video-See Inside... 700 Islands of Adventure - Our Guide to THE BAHAMAS; AROUND THE WORLD WITH STEVE, PART 2 - Visiting the Gray Gods of TIKI; THE BERMUDA "FILES" - Diving Wrecks for Clues; WHEN 1,000 WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH - How to Create Stories with Your Photos.

August 2001 - Diving The RING OF FIRE. Incredible Volcanic Islands of the Pacific - Hawaii, Indonesia, Borneo and more; Discover LITTLE CAYMAN'S Creatures Of The Sand; Diving All Night In Bonaire; INSIDE! Shoot Like A Pro - Advanced Photo Gear; Plus Special Insert - Southern Diver; WYLAND'S NEW COLUMN! Blue Adventures For Kids.

July 2001 - PHOTO ANNUAL collectors edition 2001

June 2001 - The Complete Guide to Buying Your FIRST U/W CAMERA; CAST AWAY - in the Untamed Paradise of Western Micronesia; TALES FROM THE WALL SIDE - Turks and Caicos; CAYMAN EXTREME - Taking it to the limit; THE OLD NAVY SHAKEDOWN - Searching for a Sweet Spot in the Florida Keys; Bonus 32-Page Section: Pacific Diver AND Pacific Dive Guide!

May 2001 - BIG ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS - Humpbacks, Orcas, Great Whites, Manatees, Dolphins, Mantas Rays; TAMING the Bouyancy BEAST; SEDUCED BY THE VIRGINS - The Ultimate USVI Dive Guide; MASTERCLASS - Eat Photo, Sleep Photo, Dive Photo; SPECIAL: Breathe Easy - 25 Low-Profile, Compact Regs.

April 2001 - Family Diving - Grab the kids and go! Temples Above and Below - The Treasures of Belize and the Red Sea; Underwater Dreamscape - The Solomon Islands; 9 1/2 Weeks of Furballs and Fish on Bonaire; BONUS: SPECIAL 16-Page Equipment Guide INSIDE!

March 2001 - THAT SINKING FEELING - NEW WRECKS TO EXPLORE - Bahamas, Cozumel, California; Forbidden & Mysterious - Diving Cuba!; EXCLUSIVE! David Doubilet Photo Essay; Ditch Your Tank - Snorkeling Techniques.

February 2001 - Romantic Getaways Tahiti, St. Lucia, Hawaii, Belize; FREE Southern Diver Edition Inside!; start shooting! video gear primer; discovering the glory of galapagos; inside the art and mind of wyland; a pictorial dive guide of the cayman islands.

January 2001 - 50 - fiftieth anniversary issue collector's edition 2001; PLUS: Complete Reproduction of Skin Diver's First Issue Inside; Eric Hanauer - On The Pulse Of Diving For 50 Years; Jim Church - From Flashbulbs To Digital; Nick Icorn on the history of Dive Gear; Famous Alumni; Bonnie J. Cardone on the evolution of Dive Travel; The "Last Pinup" - Meeting Bettie Page.

December 2000 - Jean-Michel Cousteau - A New Voice For The Cayman Islands; around the world with steve - A Three-Year Diving Odyssey; holiday gear guide - Cool Dive Stuff; diving the war torn pacific; Tek: Stop Decompression Boredom; Photography: The Blues; Reggae Reefs; Side-Gilled Sea Slug; Human Rights. BONUS! Caribbean Dive Guide & Ice Diving 101.

November 2000 - wish you were HERE. adventures beyond the blue edge - papua new guinea, brazil's fernando de noronha; FREE! Pacific Diver magazine inside!; jean-michel cousteau - into the unknown; awaiting discovery - eastern micronesia; go with the flow - tips on drift diving; Spring Fever - Central Florida Dive Guide; Australia's Great Barrier Reef Adventure; Meeting The Men In Gray - shark adventure in the Bahamas.

October 2000 - diving the passages of the GOLDEN DOUBLOON - the bahamas, the cayman islands, bonaire and more...; Coral Bleaching; digital cameras still get wet; dancing in the dark: learning to cave dive; insider's guide to hawaii; EXTRA: Free Southern Diver magazine inside!; The Extreme Sporter and Tek Diving; Harlequin Shrimp; Profile: Robert F. Marx; Bay Islands Dive Guide; How To Photograph Reef Fish.

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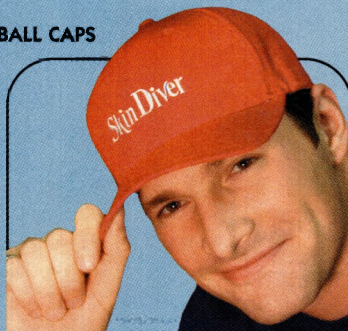
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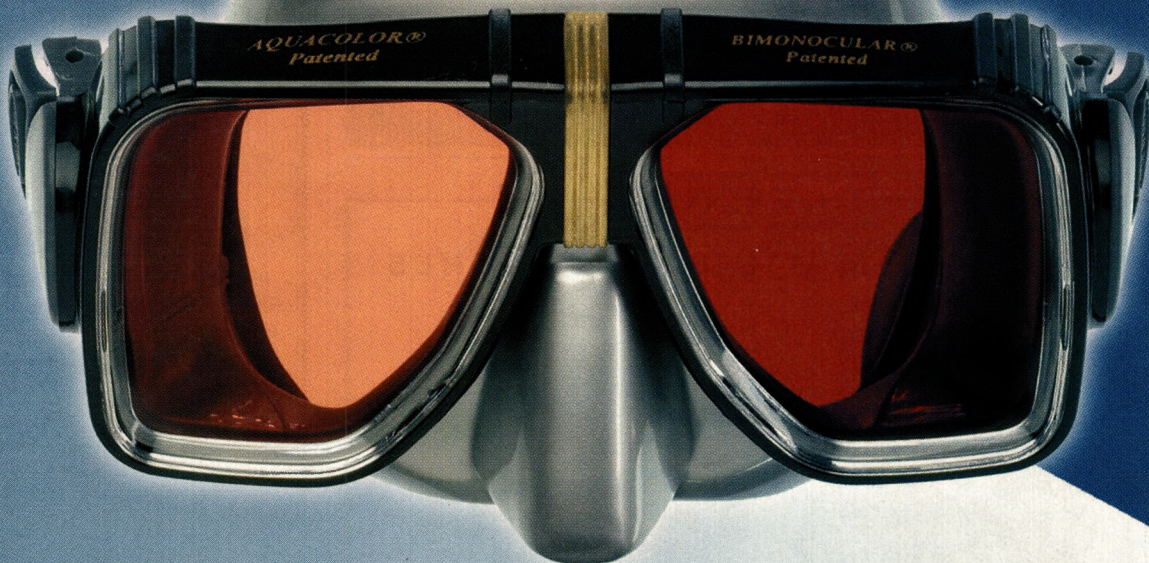


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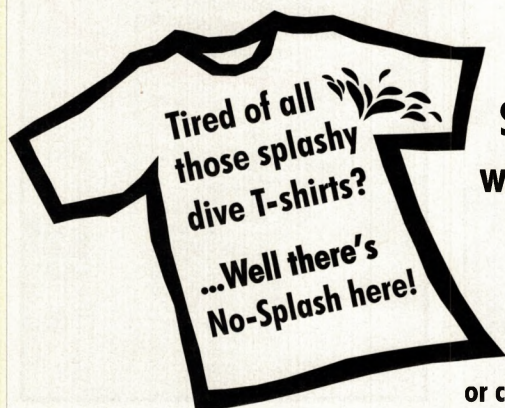
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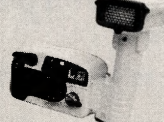
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GRAND PRIZE:

The winner's photo on the cover of the December 2002 issue of *Skin Diver* magazine!

Skin Diver's Second Annual Cover Shot Contest

Katherine Smith dreamed of seeing her image on the cover of *Skin Diver*...Her dream came true...are you next?

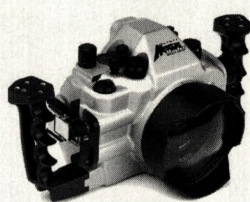


To enter, submit each photograph with an entry fee of \$5 (check or money order). Multiple entries will be accepted. Each image submitted must be accompanied with an entry fee. Clearly mark each slide with location information, and with name and address. Vertical, 35 mm slides or medium format transparencies are preferred. DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS JULY 15, 2002. Send to: Skin Diver Cover Contest, Attn: Editor, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515

Contest open to photographers of all levels. The editors of *Skin Diver* will select five finalist images. These images will be posted on *Skin Diver* Online by August 1, 2002, and *Skin Diver* readers will help select the winner. Runner-up photos will be featured in the December 2002 issue.

*For magazines mailed to subscribers only. Grand prize will include a first-time use payment of \$800. Each submission becomes property of *Skin Diver* magazine (photos will not be returned). *Skin Diver* is not responsible for lost or damaged submissions. Entries submitted without entry fee will be disqualified.

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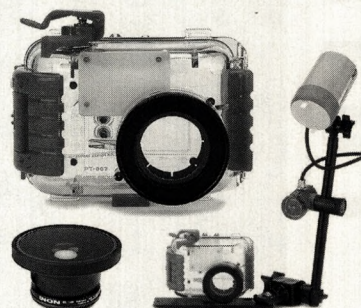
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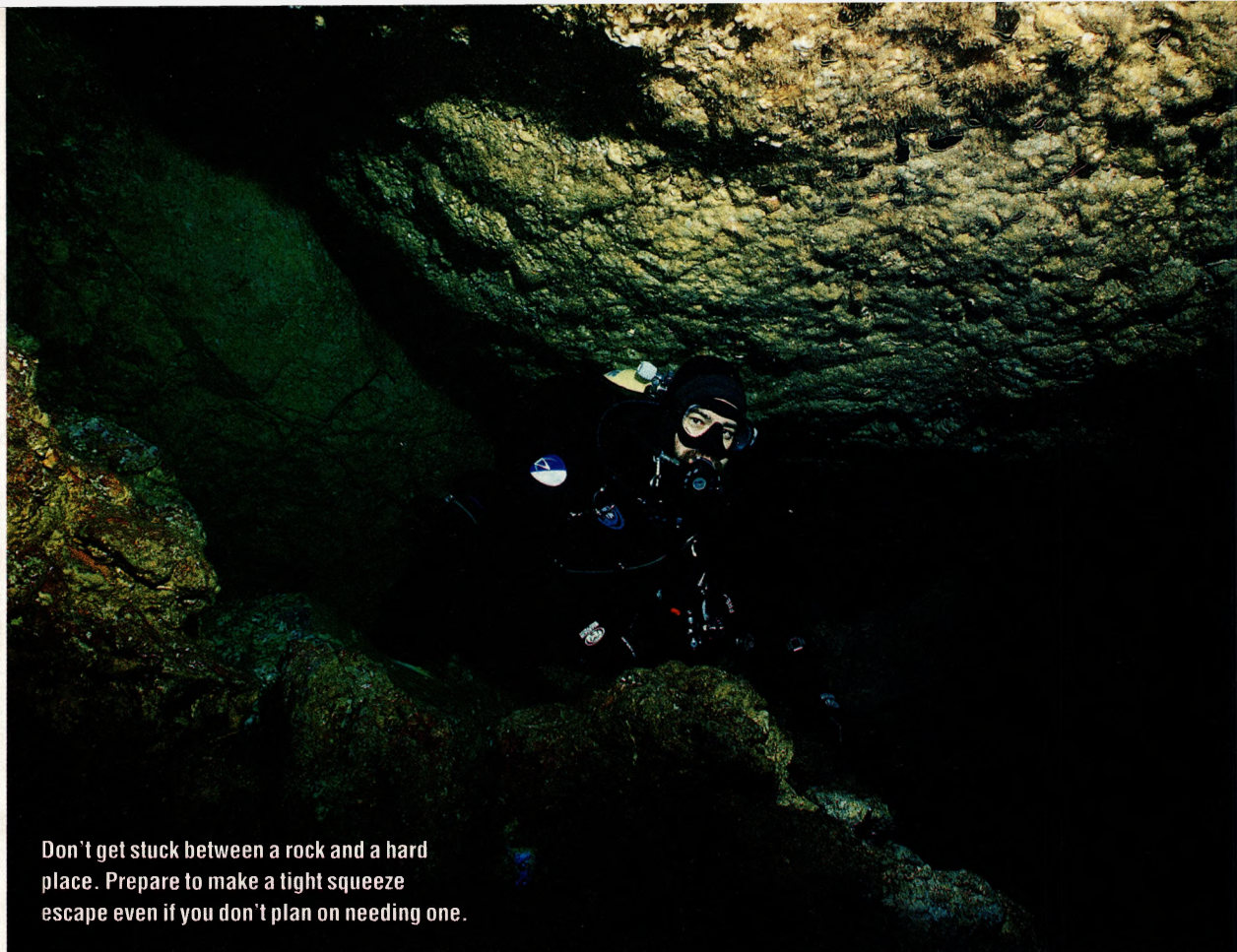
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Tight Squeeze Escapes

BY KARL SHREEVES

NICE GOING, DUMMY, I SAID TO MYSELF. I WAS STUCK under the hull of the U.S.S. *Monitor*. In an attempt to measure the turret, I'd ignorantly tried to swim through an incredibly tight gap, and now I was stupidly stuck 220 feet underwater with the clock ticking and the air in my tanks quickly emptying.

Going backward was out of the question. The ratchet-effect had me—the tendency for gear to lie nice and flat as you go in head first, but claw out and grab when you try to back up. And, lying on sand, I had no purchase to push back anyway. But, the sand was my salvation: If I could squeeze just a foot, I'd pass the tight stuff, home free. I exhaled fully, scooped the sand away in front and pushed. I popped free and headed up to deco, safe with something to write about, at least if I'd ever admit that I did it.

That was almost a decade ago, and since then I've learned that being a tek diver means being a bit of an escape artist. Learning sidemount cave diving really helped with this. Sidemounters intention-

ally head where it's tight, so they equip themselves to get out of a jam. Much of the sidemount escape philosophy applies to general tek diving—even some recreational diving for that matter. Let's look at how to be Houdini-ready in any configuration.

1 No clips or releases where you can't reach them. (For recreational divers, we'll make an exception for your tank band release.) If you get stuck, getting unstuck often depends on releasing or loosening some of your gear. That means you need to be able to get to it without the help of double-jointed shoulders and elbows.

2 More than one way out. Look at a serious tekkie, and you'll notice that every clip, release or strap has more than one way out. This ranges from straps you can cut, to accessory clips mounted to O-rings that break with a tug, to clips with releases at two ends. On stage/deco cylinders, most tekkies avoid all metal connections. For example, they use cutable rope or nylon in the connecting strap. Jammed



In an attempt to measure the turret, I'd ignorantly tried to swim through an incredibly tight gap, and now I was stupidly stuck 220 feet underwater with the clock ticking....

3 As you go in, stay wide. When you come to a tight spot, there's a tendency to make yourself as small as possible, and that's fine, as long as you're sure you'll fit or if you don't, you won't be stuck in a major way. But a side-mount diver goes into these areas with a profile that's intentionally a bit high. That way, if push comes to stuck, the diver gains room to back out just by moving accessories, emptying the BC, etc.. If you enter a tight area with minimal profile already, you don't have any leeway to get unstuck. (By the way, this applies to areas where you might get stuck, not where

4 Get it off your chest. For most divers, the place you get stuck is between your back and belly-to-chest area. If your secondary regulator is there, you can't get it when you're in tight. If a back-up light is there, it's going to stay

If you're saying to yourself, "Karl, I don't dive in tight places like you. I hate them, so this doesn't apply to me." I say, "All the more reason this applies to you."

And if you're a bit off your rocker like me and you like tight stuff, you want to be Houdini-ready, not because you *might* need it, but because you *will* need it. 🐟

A full-page photograph of a scuba diver in a cave. The diver is wearing a black wetsuit, a mask, and a regulator. They are positioned in front of a large, textured rock formation. The lighting is dim, with a bright light source visible behind the diver, creating a silhouette effect. The water is dark and still.

Caves, wrecks and other technical environments often provide ample opportunities to dive in close quarters.

Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival

Sponsored by the Ford Seahorses Scuba Diving Club, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival will take place in Dearborn, MI, on February 16, 2002. This year's keynote speaker will be Bernie Choudhury, author of *The Last Dive*. The Annual Underwater Photo Contest results will also be announced.

For more information, visit www.fordseahorses.org, or call the information hotline at (734) 769-2458.

Scuba Supermarket

The Ocean Wreck Divers Club will hold its 13th annual Scuba Supermarket on Sunday, February 17, 2002, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Toms River East High School on Raider's Way Road, Toms River, NJ. Last year more than 20 Scuba Shops had booths at the market, and more than 1,200 divers attended. Admission is \$4.

*For further information, call Frank Dent
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
Course Offering

The Cleveland Lakefront State Park, Dive Rescue and Evidence Recovery agency will be hosting a "Rapid Deployment Search and Rescue/Recovery" course April 2 to 5, 2002. Designed for dive team members and tenders as well as public safety officials in law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies, the course, held in the open water environment, costs \$330/diver and \$130/tender.

For more information, contact Officer Kevin Erskine, Harbor Seals Dive Rescue Team, Cleveland Lakefront State Park at (216) 881-8141, ext. 3024.

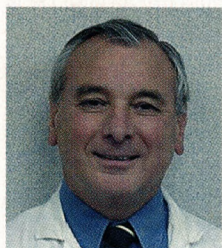
Beneath the Sea

The largest consumer diving event in North America, this year Beneath the Sea will be held in Secaucus, NJ, March 22 to 24. There will be 300 exhibitors from all corners of the world, over 60 seminars by specialists and industry experts, social events, workshops and much more. Stan Waterman, world-renowned videographer, will host the Saturday Night Film Festival. The WDHOF will also host some events.

For more information, call (914) 664-4310, e-mail info@beneaththesea.org or visit www.beneaththesea.org. 

I RECENTLY RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A DIVER WHO was planning a diving vacation in an underwater habitat. The habitat, an underwater lodge, is pressurized with air to 1.6 atmospheres (equivalent to about 20 feet underwater). Guests at the lodge can stay under pressure for up to 22 hours with unlimited diving. The sea floor around the lodge is approximately 30 feet deep. The diver was concerned that 22 hours is a long time underwater and could not find dive tables for the exposure.

A dive that lasts more than 12 hours is considered a saturation dive because tissues become fully saturated with nitrogen. Saturation diving is commonly used in deep underwater work where the diver would have decompression times that exceeded the dive times to such a degree that the work would be impractical. Saturation diving allows divers to work at deep depths for many days without decompressing after each work cycle. The divers live in a pressurized habitat on a dive ship and are lowered to the work site in a pressurized bell. The habitat and bell are at the same pressure as the work site, so no inert gas exchange occurs during the exposure. When the job is completed, decompression from saturation is done over several days in the shipboard habitat. A rule of thumb for decompression time is one day for each 100 feet of depth, plus one day. The same decompression schedule applies to a one day or a one week dive. A diver saturated at 400 feet would require about 5 days of decompression.



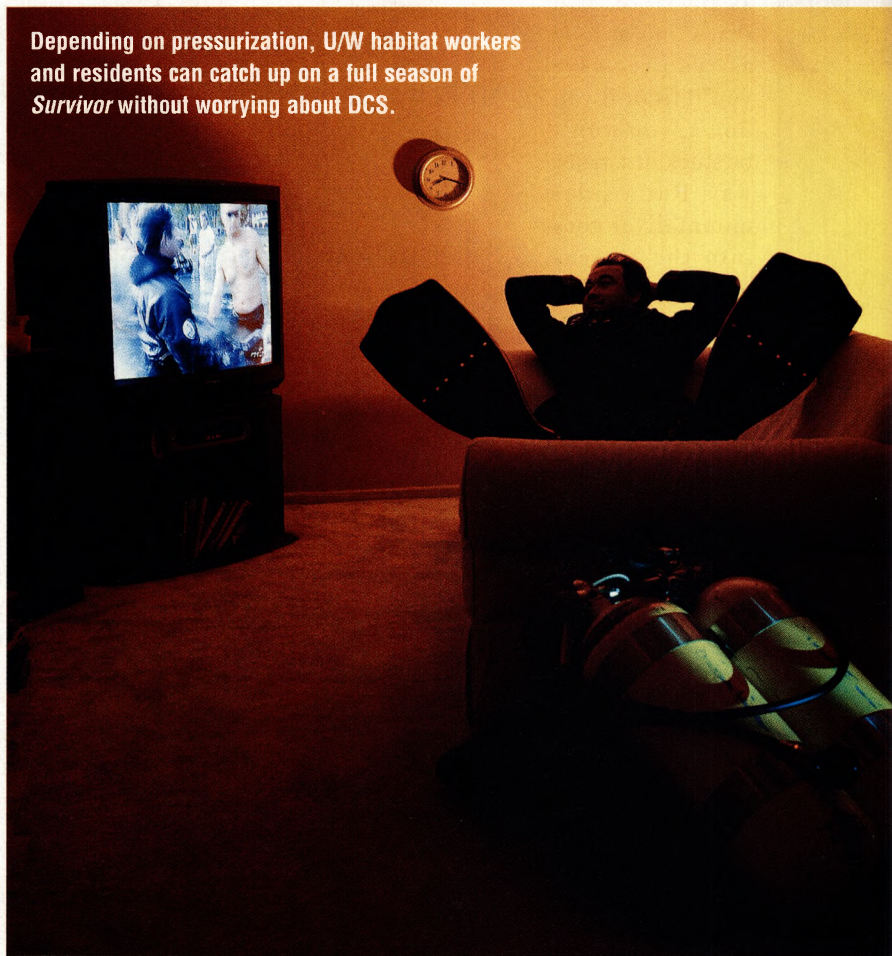
How much decompression does our sport diver need after 22 hours in a habitat pressurized to 20 feet? The answer is none. There has been a substantial amount of research done on shal-

low air saturation diving both for understanding the physiology of saturation diving, and for research in submarine escape where submariners trapped in a sunken submarine might be in a higher pressure for many days before being rescued. The research of J.S. Haldane in 1908 indicated that a diver would not be bent if he or she did not increase

Supersaturation

tissue supersaturation more than twofold. That is, if you were at 33 feet (2 ATA) you could surface safely (to 1 ATA) with unlimited bottom time because doubling

Depending on pressurization, U/W habitat workers and residents can catch up on a full season of *Survivor* without worrying about DCS.



the supersaturation would not cause decompression sickness (DCS). This supersaturation principle is the basis for nearly all decompression tables and computers. The 2:1 ratio does not always prevent DCS. Most decompression tables use "surfacing ratios" less than two. Surfacing directly from the habitat saturated at 20 feet after a few dives to 30 feet results in tissue supersaturation well below the 2:1 ratio (it is about 1.6:1), and is not likely to cause DCS. Experience suggests

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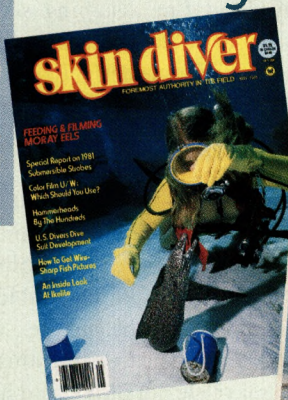
that a safe no-deco ascent from air saturation could be made from depths up to 26 feet (surfacing ratio 1.79). To partake in safe saturation diving, you will need to learn new rules about decompression to conduct safe upward and downward dives from the habitat. 🐟

You can find more on diving medicine at www.scubamed.com.

Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving of today.

1981

It's a Tough Job...Really



Some things never change. In May, 1981, then-contributing writer Al Hornsby shed a bright light on the misconceptions of dive travel photo shoots. Jet-setting to tropical islands, spending your whole day on the beach *and* getting paid top-dollar for it...how could that *not* be glamorous?

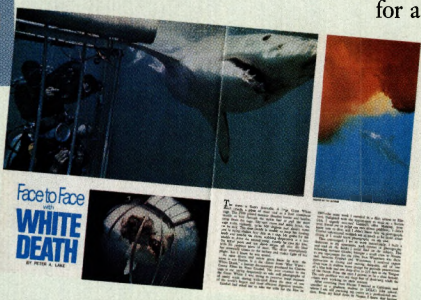


The assignment: Take the perfect shot of a bikini-clad snorkeler relating to a group of fish. The slogan: Meet the Natives. Simple enough. But in order to battle the unexpected 50 mph weather front, 6-foot breakers and rain in 55-degree weather, Hornsby and his model made a few adjustments. And they were nothing short of alternately breathing from a reg to a snorkel at 25 feet under and packing a 6-pound weight in her bikini bottom. Sounds real glamorous, huh? Sign me up. 🐟

1972

I've Come a Long Way to Meet You

The feature documentary *Blue Water—White Death* brings to mind images of a 2,500-pound Great White shaking a diver in a cage like “dice in a cup.” The diver inside the cage was Peter Lake, and as he told *Skin Diver* in 1972, there was little between the man who “seldom swam” and the beast who had a “possible preference for a live appetizer.” Just four years earlier, Peter



Gimbel offered Lake, a then first-time film course student and a nondiver, the chance to take some stills for the film. Intense training ensued. Along with his certification, more film classes and plopping down big bucks for equipment, Lake learned to overcome his fear of drowning. And it all led to that moment, a nose to nose, “How ya doin’?” encounter with a 16-foot Great White. Was it all worth it? If you’ve seen the film, you know the answer. 🐟



1960

How Could We Have Known?

As reported in August 1960, Jack Dudley, one of the top amateur underwater spearfishermen in the U.S., broke the world record for spearing a Black Sea Bass. The leviathan weighed in at 480 pounds and was 84 inches long, 54 inches around. The photo published with the article shows the mammoth size of the bass next to its proud spearfisherman.

In the old days, catching fish for the pure exhilaration of finding the granddaddy of its species provided proud, trophy moments. Ones that spearfishermen, no doubt, relived at pubs on both coasts. Who would have thought then that years later, divers would be lucky to find a single Black Sea Bass, never mind one of that historical size. Now listed as an endangered and protected species, an image like the one from 1960 will no longer get a diver a hearty slap on the back, but a slap from the government. My, how things change. 🐟



Every day divers are humbled by the sheer exhilaration of encountering marine life. From curious Calico Bass and playful dolphins, to sleek sharks and heart-stopping Humpback Whales, to be in their midst is the "stuff" of diving. Each month *Skin Diver* guest writers will relive their unique moments under the sea, leaving us at the edge of our seats and aching to get back in the water.

DURING A RECENT TRIP TO AUSTRALIA'S CORAL Sea aboard Mike Ball's *Spoilsport*, I had one of the most amazing animal encounters I've ever experienced in 23 years of diving. I swear that everything you're about to read is absolutely true. (And I have the pictures to prove it.)

The adventure takes place at a small speck in the Flinders Reef group known as Tawriffic. It's a fairly small, flat pinnacle with a top about 30 feet deep. We were told that there was a resident Loggerhead Turtle and were asked *not* to touch him. He'd be very comfortable with humans as long as we didn't make contact.

I was the last one down. When I got to the reef, I looked around to see if I could spot the turtle. When I saw about a dozen divers all congregated around one spot, I figured the turtle must be the object of all of this attention—and he was. Knowing my air consumption was better than most of the other divers, I figured I'd mosey around the reef, let the crowd thin out and come back to take shots of the turtle.


Sure enough, after about 40 minutes, divers started heading to the surface. When there were only about five of us left,

At 18 feet, I was flat on my back, neutrally buoyant and pretty much face-up horizontally in the water. The turtle was directly over me. And then it happened.

While I hovered, he settled down and landed gently on my chest. He stared into my eyes (I'm assuming seeing his reflection in my mask). As he sat on my chest, I could almost see him trying to figure out what exactly I was. And I watched in amazement (and even with a little trepidation) as he slowly opened his mouth, stretched toward me...and gingerly nibbled my nose.

He pulled his head back, as if to say, "That's not a sponge!" Once more, he nibbled. Once more he pulled his head back. Then he looked at my pressure gauge, nibbled on that and, satisfied that there was nothing edible there, pushed off my chest and continued to the surface.

What an experience! And everyone I've told this to has responded with, "Are you crazy? He not only could have bitten through your mask but he could have broken your nose!"

All I can tell you is that there was some kind of bond, a communication, a connection between us, and I just knew the turtle wasn't going to hurt me. So instead of coming up bloody and noseless, I've got one hell of a story to tell, thanks to a curious turtle at Tawriffic.  —BY KEN KURTIS

The Nose Nibbler

I decided to go find the turtle and finish off my roll.

I found him merrily munching away and decided that the shot I wanted was of him coming straight for the camera. As he worked his way around the reef, I maneuvered myself in front of him and was able to snap off two frames, before I ran out of film. Fortunately, I still had plenty of air, so I decided to hang out with my new buddy.

After about another 10 minutes of cruising the reef, the turtle looked up to the surface, raised up on his front flippers, and gently pushed off the reef and slowly headed up for a breath. Since I still had to do a safety stop, I figured I'd go up with him.

I was checking my gauge when I noticed that he was gradually turning toward me. As we continued up, he had slowly spun himself all the way around and was now coming directly at me. Remembering the admonition not to make contact, and assuming he was just going to pass over me, I started leaning back a bit. He kept coming, and I kept leaning.



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